

A GUIDEBOOK FOR MUSLIMS

by

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Translation :

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**ACADEMY OF
ISLAMIC RESEARCH & PUBLICATIONS
LUCKNOW (India)**

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**Academy of
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Post Box No. 119, Nadwatul Ulama
Lucknow - 226 007 (India)

Series No. 191

Editions :

Arabic Second 1983
Urdu —,— 1985
English First 1985

Printed at :

Nadwa Press
Nadwatul Ulama
Tagore Marg
Lucknow, (India)

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*In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the
Most Merciful.*

INTRODUCTION

*Praise be to Allah, the One, and Blessings and Peace on him after
whom there is no prophet.*

Dissertations pertaining to Islamic *shari'ah* and its doctrine of duties and obligations have continued to be written since the beginning of the Islamic Era. The growth of Muslim society and expansion of its political power, naturally, brought up new problems and the need to solve them before those who took the responsibility of providing intellectual guidance to the community. Legal tracts and treatises kept on multiplying with the result that today it is difficult for a Muslim to derive benefit from all of them or even to make selection of a few of these works dispassionately for his own use.

All those who are interested in the problems confronting the *ummah*, and who keep an eye on the right and wrong influences exerted on it, are aware of the need of the community in regard to a concise manual, a guidebook which may help them in the practical consequences of living up to their duties to God and fellow human beings—in devotions and morals alike. It is a common and natural requirement of all Muslims in every age and country. The time when the Prophet was alive was undoubtedly the ideal period so far as piety and devotion are concerned, but we find examples when certain people desired to have short and concise instructions, even at that time, to walk on the right path. It has been related in the *ahadith* that a Bedouin said to the Prophet, "O Apostle of Allah, detailed instructions concerning Islam have grown enough to be comprehended by an illiterate man like me. Tell me something in brief

so that I may cling to it." The Prophet paid full attention to the request of the Bedouin. He neither admonished him nor took his request as a pretext to shirk the responsibility of learning as much about his religion as possible. The reply of the Prophet gave to the Bedouin was: "Keep your tongue busy with the recollection of God."¹

Abū 'Amr relates on the authority of Saḡyān b. 'Abdullah that he said to the Prophet, "O Apostle of Allah, tell me something about Islam that I may not require further elucidation from anybody."

The Prophet replied, "Say: I give faith to Allah, and stick to it firmly."²

These *ahādīth* have always inspired those who have tried to pen comprehensive manuals for the social, moral and religious guidance of the Muslims: books that may be found sufficing for day-to-day needs of an average Muslim.

The first to feel the need of such a work, so far as I am aware, was Shaikh-ul-Islām Abū Hāmid Mohamīad b. Muīammad al-Ghazzālī (d. 505/1111) whose *Ihyā' Uloom id-dīn* is not only the most renowned but also a pioneering work of its kind. He tried to make it as comprehensive as possible so that it may serve as a guide to the seekers of knowledge in every branch of Islamic learning. The matters dealt with by him in this work relate to the creed of Islam, doctrine of duties and obligations, methods of self-purification, acts of devotion, norms of ethics and spiritual experiences, *ahādīth* dealing with the virtues demanded by Islam, Quranic verses rousing awe of God and hope in His mercy, appealing sermons and stories of the virtuous men of God—all these were included in the work with a fascinating charm with the result that this book by Imām Gazzālī became a captivating work which animates the desire to live by faith and attain spiritual perfection. It points out to its readers their weaknesses in a subtle manner and shows the way

1. *Sunan Ibn Mājah.*
2. *Sahih Muslim*

how to get rid of them. Critics of Imām Gazzālī have, no doubt charged him of being influenced by certain philosophical concepts which he had himself assailed while others look askance at the way he cites *ahādīth* not regarded authentic by the authorities. Some other faults can be found by sharp critics yet all judicious and competent scholars are agreed upon the utility and efficacy of the book. Talented critics like Ibn al-Jauzī¹ and Shaikh-ul-Islām Ibn Taimiyah² have recognised the great worth and utility of the work. It is also a well-known fact that save for the six authentic collections of *ahādīth* and a few other similar works, no other book has been received so warmly nor any other book has had a popularity similar to it which has been treated as a manual of study all over Islamic world by the people ever since it came to be written.

The question of writing such guidebooks has also engaged the attention of scholars coming after al-Ghazzālī. Ibn al-Jauzī (d. 597/1200), the scholar of *Talbis Iblīs* fame, felt the need of editing and re-writing a brief summary of the *Ihyā'* which appeared under the title of *Minhāj-ul-Qāsidīn*.³ Several competent scholars also wrote commentaries on the *Ihyā'*. A scholar of Iraq, Hāfiz Zain-ud-dīn, the author of *Al-Alfiya* extracted the *ahādīth* cited in the *Ihyā'* and examined them in accordance with the norms of *hādīth* criticism. The great scholar of India, Syed Murtazā of Bilgrām (d. 1205/1784) wrote the *Ithāf us-Sa'adat-el-Muttaqīn Sharh Ihyā' Uloom id-dīn* in 20 Volumes which is no less than an encyclopaedia although he confined his work to the compass of the *Ihyā'*.

The *Ihyā'* also became instrumental in bringing up a new mystical order known as the Ghazzāliyah order which held the ground for a long time in Hadramaut and several other Arab countries.

1. See *Al-Muntazam*, Vol. IX, pp. 169-70 by al-Jauzī, Da'iratul Ma'ārif, Hyderabad.
2. See *Fatawā Ibn Taimiyah*, Vol. II, p. 194.
3. It was further summarised in *Mukhtasar Minhāj-ul-Qāsidīn* by Ibn Qudāmah Maqdisi.

Al-Ghazzālī wrote another book in Persian on the lines of *Ihyā'* in which he kept in view the taste and special needs of the Persians. This work entitled *Kimīyāi Sa'ādat* is a compendium of the *Ihyā'*, and has been very popular among the Persian knowing people.¹

Next to *Ihyā' 'Uloom ad-dīn* was *Ghunyat-ut-Talībīn* by Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir Jīlānī (d. 561/1166) which reflects not only the basic characteristics of its predecessor but also the inclination of the people of his time to be led to the content of a deep and real spiritual experience by a guide perfect in spirit. The chief characteristic of Shaikh 'Abdul Qādir Jīlānī's work was that it was written, chiefly for the guidance of his disciples and those of the coming generations desirous of making progress on the path of spirit. The book enumerates duties and obligations prescribed by the orthodox canon and the way to abide by them in all sincerity, the Quranic *āyats* and signs of God within one's own self and in the world outside, a selection of the *ahādīth* and incidents illustrating the virtuous behaviour of the men of God so as to enable the reader to pattern his life in accordance with the dictates of God. The book gives a gist of essential religious obligations like *tahārat* (purification), *salāt* (prayer), *zakāt* (poor-due) and *hajj* (pilgrimage) alongwith the features of Islamic ethical conduct as demanded by the Qur'ān and the example set by the Prophet. This work can serve as a guide to anyone who is unable to find a spiritual mentor. The author gives his own experiences and stages of spiritual progress; he can be seen in it as a learned Hanbalite taking the path of the Prophet. One of its chapters is devoted to advocacy of reputable acts and discontinuance of those forbidden by the *shari'ah*. He expounds the creed of Islam on the lines of theological interpretation by Hanbalite doctors which is particularly apparent in the discussion

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1. A brief tract written on its lines by al-Ghazzālī exists under the name of *Bidāyah-al-Hidāyah* which has since been edited by Shaikh Muhammad al-Hajjār of Halb and published by Maktaba-al-Dawah of the same city.

of the attributes of God and refutation of those disagreeing with that school on the subject.

The author has included his public sermons in the book and explained the significance of certain months and days so as to make it useful for the religious gatherings in vogue in those days in Baghdād for animating spiritual fervour among his audience and disciples. In this part of the Book his exhortations become more explicit and detailed than was the custom of the then scholars of *ḥadīth*, obviously, for the benefit of the common people. The book comes to an end with the ethical norms and behaviour expected of the novices desirous of treading the path of spirit.

The book has remained a manual of study for the people following the Qādirite order as well as among others who want to pattern their lives according to the teachings of the Qur'ān and the *sunnaḥ* and to follow the path leading to purification of one's own self and the morals. The number of those who have benefited from this book in Asia and Africa would run into hundreds of thousand.

Another lexicologist and scholar of *ḥadīth*, Mujd-ud-dīn of Firozābād (d. 817/1414), the author of *al-Qamūs* wrote, with the same end in view, the *Safar-as-Sa'adat*. In it he has given a brief description of the character and morals of the Prophet, his devotions and dealings with others, his teachings and exhortations in a way that it can serve as a guide for any Muslim desirous of leading his life according to the example set by the Prophet. The author has also devoted a portion of the book to the medical prescriptions of the Prophet. The book covers about 150 pages of an average format.¹

But a book still more well-known and which also marks a consummate effort in this direction is the *Zād al-Ma'ad-fi-*

1. The book's original title is *Sirāt-i-Mustaḳīm* but its more commonly known name is *Safr-us-Sa'adat*. Written in Persian, it was rendered into Arabic in the beginning of the ninth century by Abdul Jād Muhammad b. Mahmūd Makhzūmī.

Hadye Khairat 'Ibad of Hāfiz Ibn Qayyim al-Jauzi (d. 751/1330). No other work written after *Ihya'ul-'Uloom* can be compared to it in its comprehensive treatment of *sirah* and *sunnah*, *fiqh* and *kalām* and the *tazkiyah* and *ihsān*. At the same time, it excels the *Ihya* in its more faithful reporting of the *ahādīth* and *sunnah* of the Prophet. It is really a work which succeeds in condensing extensive topics. The book has been valued as a guide and teacher by all those who are meticulous in taking after the Prophet's example. In short, the work is a compendium of Islamic learning pertaining to *hādīth*, *fiqh*, *kalām*, Arabic etymology and grammar and represents a marvellous achievement of a scholar who was an authority in all the different branches of Islamic learning.¹

Another work written with the objective of providing religious and moral guidance is *Shira'at-ul-Islām ilā-Dār-es-Salam* by Muhammad b. Abī Bakr Samarqandī. The author writes in the introduction to his work :

"This is the book which should first be taught to the younger generation of Muslims and should be taken as a guidebook by those true in faith; rather, any one desirous to make the journey of spirit cannot do without it (if he does not want to be misled by his own baser instincts and predilections)."²

The objective with which this book was written appears to be that the author wanted it to serve as a guide for his own progeny. He has given the exact creed of Islam as finds support from the authentic *ahādīth* and then invites to follow

1. For a detailed description see the portion dealing with *Zād-al-Ma'ād* and Hāfiz Ibn Qayyim-al-Jauzi in Vol. II of the *Saviours of Islamic Spirit*.
2. Unfortunately it is not possible to throw more light on the author or even indicate his year of death. The author of *Kashf-uz-Zunūn* writes that it is a very good and useful work. It has been discovered by my learned friend Muhammad Nainār, a teacher in the Nehru University, Delhi, who is presently editing it for publication.

the path of the earlier scholars and followers of the Prophet's *sunnaḥ*. He has dealt with the morals befitting the scholars and gives his own experiences and examples. Despite great sincerity of the author apparent in this work, it nevertheless contains certain matter which cannot stand the norms of *ḥadīth* criticism.

Among the popular works, written in an easy and simple style, one is *Mālā Budda Minḥu* by Qāzī Thanā Ullāh of Pānīpāt.¹ The book first gives a detailed exposition of the creed held by the *ahl-i-sunnat wal jamā'at* and then goes on to briefly describe the essential features of purification, prayer, poor-due, fasting and pilgrimage. He concentrates mainly on the questions which ought to be known by everyone for correctly performing these devotions, but of which people have generally little knowledge. However, a few intricate matters are also discussed in it. A chapter is devoted to God-fearing behaviour and another to individual and collective dealings, sales and purchases indicating their correct and mistaken forms as prevalent in the days of the author. Yet another section deals with the social behaviour, one's duties to others and the customs and usages of the time which were then in vogue but sinful in character. He exhorts to commend the reputable and to forbid the impermissible acts. Lastly, one section is devoted to *tazkiyah* and *iḥsān*, the sincere worship of God and attaining the true spirit of faith. This section is brief yet it leaves nothing of importance.

The chief characteristic of this work is that it discusses only those matters which must be known to an average Muslim busy with the affairs of the world. It is specially useful for youngmen making an entry in life as the grown-ups. This book written in Persian and covering 150 pages of an average size, was studied in religious-minded middle class Muslim families in India for about a century.

1. For his biographical details see *Nuzhatul Khawātir*, Vol. VII.

Another work of great worth and importance which made a deeper impact on the behaviour and morals of the people was the *Sirat-i-Mustaqim*. It is a collection of the sermons and exhortations of Saiyid Ahmad Shahid (d. 1246/1831), the founder of the great revivalist-cum-jihad movement,¹ which were compiled in Persian by the two colleagues and deputies of author, namely, Maulana Muhammad Ismail Shahid (1246/1831) and Maulana 'Abdul Ha'i of Budhana (d. 1243/1828). A distinctive feature of the *Sirat-i-Mustaqim* is that it expounds detailed instructions for following the Islamic precepts and the *sunnah* which alone are recognised by it as the straight path. It advocates superiority of the prophetic way and observance of the duties prescribed by the *shari'ah* over the path of mysticism and voluntary devotions designed for spiritual uplift. It also lays great emphasis on the orthodox creed of Islam and emphasises uncompromising monotheism by denouncing the beliefs, rites and customs as well as innovations which had come into vogue in the circles of mystics and mendicants of the time. It also takes to task the unauthorised practices taken as pious acts through a philosophical interpretation or under the influence of shi'ites, misguided pietists and innovators. The customs commonly practised by the then Muslims of India on the occasions of births and deaths or borrowed from their polytheistic neighbours coupled with a total ignorance of the teachings of the Qur'an and the *sunnah* constituted the greatest threat to Islamic way of life. The book invited the Muslims to give up all such practices, urged them to safeguard the Islamic identity of the Muslim society, showed the correct way of Islamic behaviour and morals and expounded the method of self-purification and attaining perfection of spirit. It enumerated the pitfalls encountered in the way of attaining propinquity to God and explained the

1. For a detailed study of this great movement refer to *Saiyid Ahmad Shahid—His life and Mission* by Mohiuddin Ahmad, published by the Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, Lucknow.

methods by which these difficulties were to be overcome.

Another characteristic feature of this work was that in addition to the delineation of creeds, devotions and the mystical path consistent with the Quranic teachings, it also urged the people to disseminate the message of true faith, bear hardships for it and prepare themselves for fighting in the way of God. It gave hope and confidence to the Muslims and prepared them to sacrifice everything for making the religion of God triumphant in the lands inhabited by them.

T'ālim-ud-din written by Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānvī, covering 144 pages, also deserves to be listed among the educative and reformatory dissertations. It discusses Islamic beliefs, devotions, morals, social behaviour and the mystical disciplines. But another more comprehensive and well-known work of the author was written under the name of *Bihishtī Zewar* which has been one of the most significant works in making the people in India conversant with the teachings of Islam and thereby helping them to reform their behaviours and morals as well as giving up several popular but heterodox social customs. The book was written primarily for Muslim girls and women but it can be of use to others, and even scholars can derive benefit from it. It can serve the purpose of a legal and religious guide for every home. Few books in Urdu would have been reprinted as many times as this work.

The need for such works has increased in the present times when the people want more concise books than those written earlier. The rapid pace of life today has created a tendency to avoid taking pains of going through voluminous works. The people now want small simplified works which can be read without taxing their minds. They seem to have lost the stamina for everything requiring labour and concentration owing, perhaps, to the never ending demands of the modern culture.¹

1. It is perhaps for this reason that the modern times have come to be known as the 'sandwiched age' by certain persons.

A need was therefore being felt for a long time for a work which might take the place of the earlier ones. It is also true that every language continues to be spoken by several generations over the centuries but its mode of expression changes in a few hundred years to such an extent that the same thing has to be expressed in a different way to be understood by the later generations. Every age has its own distinctive psychological traits, new weaknesses and propensities while Islamic concepts held by the people continue to be influenced by these extraneous pressures. All the great reformers of the ages past had to remain alive to the march of time. The second century of Islamic era and the times following it was the period unduly impressed by Greek philosophy and its intellectualism. The intellectual atmosphere today, including even of those who have a religious bent of mind, permeates with the influences exerted by political philosophies of the West as well as by its social and economic systems and cultural traits. The only unchangeable book is the Book of God, and then come the invaluable treasure of *ahādīth* of the holy Prophet which are still relevant to the life of man as ever: all the other works cannot escape the law of change and have to be edited or abridged, amplified or re-interpreted in these changed circumstances in order to be understood by the people.

A few of my sincere friends had been insisting upon me for a long time to compile a work on this subject which may be taken as a guidebook for everyday affairs in the same way as earlier works were written for the people of those times. The erudition, piety and sincerity of those who have earlier penned such treatises on this subject brought to my mind my own limitations which were further reduced by my literary engagements, frequent travels and other pre-occupations. All these left me little time to devote myself seriously to the subject as deserved by it. At last, however, the studies undertaken by me so far and the experiences I have had in dealing with the people as well as the absence of such a

work in modern Islamic literature forced me to take up this task according to my capacity and knowledge. Actually it was the realization that any more delay in bringing out a book on this subject would mean a dereliction of duty I owed to others—a sin for which I may be accountable to God—that made me start the work on it. The work thus begun was completed sooner than I had expected despite several obstacles that impeded its progress.

I have given in this book a digest of my studies and experiences that I have gained through my contact with different sections of the people. I have also quoted from earlier writings in order to make myself understood by the readers. I hope that Allah, the Beneficent, would make it useful to all those who would go through it and help those who want to learn how to live as Muslims. Arabic and Hindi renderings of this work have already been published and now this English version by the pen of Syed Mohiuddin is before you. I pray that this interpretation may in some degree inspire those who read it.

*My hope of success is not save with Allah; in Him I rely
and to Him I turn in repentance.*

S. ABUL HASAN ALI NADVI

Daira Shāh 'Alam Ullah

March 10, 1985.

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I

A FEW PRELIMINARY REMARKS

These pages describe the peculiar traits and distinguishing features of Islam, its basic creed, permissible behaviours, the sayings and doings of the holy Prophet, his zeal for service to God and spreading his message, fighting in the way of God, virtuous demeanour as demanded by the Qurān and the *sunnah* and the character and manners of the Prophet, albeit briefly, along with the Quranic verses sounding a warning against the ruses of Satan and human weaknesses, for the training and guidance of those who can, by acting on these precepts, set an example for others. Anyone sincerely desirous of his self-reformation and leading a virtuous life need always to be careful of self-delusion but those who want an inner perfection of spirit and propinquity to God should try to follow, with great care, in the foot-steps of the holy Prophet. This is what Allah says for the guidance of such people.

“And those who struggle in Our cause, surely We shall guide them in Our ways; and God is with the good-doers.” (29 : 69).

It might occur to some of our readers that this slim volume contains nothing new save what is known to every Muslim. All these topics have been dealt with in detail in

the Book of God and the *ahadīth*. The writings of scholars, old and new, have these matters dispersed in their numerous writings, as the author has himself cited references to several such books written since the time of Imām Ghazzālī. They may have thoughts that this work is only a compilation and summary of old writings rather than an attempt to show a new path. They may also harbour the idea that since they are already leading an Islamic way of life, and following its injunctions, what should they do to derive any worthwhile benefit from this work or how should they make a break to change the pattern of their behaviour which may also be satisfying to them.

We have tried to answer these questions in the light of our own experiences in the following lines and hope that those who have a sincere desire to seek the path of righteousness shall pay heed to our suggestions.

First of all one should try to take this book as a tutor for his beliefs and creed and make it a guidebook for his life. This is not to suggest that this is the work of any *mujtahid* or an academician who has been endowed with any special knowledge by God, not shared by others; for, this is not at all the intention of the writer who is fully aware of his own shortcomings. The reason for this piece of advice is that it is a collection of all those truths and fundamentals of Islamic creed which are unanimously accepted by the *ahl-i-sunnat wal jamā'at*. These are the matters of which every Muslim should keep himself abreast. It would therefore be of no use to go through this work for increasing one's knowledge or for passing one's time, or else to pass a verdict on the erudition or unlearnedness of the writer.

The writer stands in need of benefitting from this work and he considers himself on the same level as his readers. Yet, a few suggestions are given here on the basis of the experiences of the author which can be fruitfully followed by the readers also.

1. Our starting point should be that God who has sent

down the Scripture, and the Prophet who preached His message, have left no room for any deviation or aberration from the authoritative creed. We should therefore, first of all have a look at our own beliefs in the light of the Qur'ān, for it is the only mirror which can enable us to see our true reflection. This work is an epitome of Quranic teachings, directions of the holy Prophet and researches of the scholars belonging to *ahl-i-sunnat* in regard to apostolic doctrines of faith.

2. The prescribed devotions and its four practical manifestations should be observed in their true spirit with complete regard to their external and internal as well as physical and spiritual contents. We should follow the path of the holy Prophet, as best as possible, and should try to find out, sincerely and diligently, his modes and manners—for he is the only perfect and complete model for us. Let alone his worshipful devotions to the Lord, his everyday life has been held up as a standard to be followed by us. Says the Lord :

“You have had a good example in God’s Messenger for whosoever hopes for God and the Last Day, and remembers God oft.” (33 : 21).

The more we are able to follow the example of the Prophet and mould our lives on his pattern, the more our devotions would be acceptable to God. The books narrating the sayings and doings of the holy Prophet contain such a complete record of his prayers, observances, summons for *jihad*, his daily routine, behaviour and manners that nothing comparable to them can be found elsewhere about anyone born on this planet.

After we have patterned our lives after the holy Prophet, we should endeavour that our religious observances, particularly the prayers, should reflect the reality and strength of our faith. This is the way to translate our faith into our behaviours and morals, into our individual and social life as well as to make them a means to gain certitude in faith and love and propinquity to God.

3. Rights of the people come next to creed, religious observances and the rights of God. There is not the least doubt that Allah will condone the lapses in regard to the obligations we owe to Him but the remission of wrongs committed by one man to another will be left to the discretion of the wronged person. Bukhārī contains a *ḥadīth* wherein the Prophet is reported to have said: "If anybody is under obligation to his (Muslim) brother whether relating to his prestige or something of that sort (like property or loan), it is better that he should meet his obligation in this world rather than defer it to the time when there would be neither *dinār* nor *dirham* (to compensate for it). If the defendant has any meritorious act to his credit so much of it would be taken as can satisfy the claim of the plaintiff. If such a person has none of the virtues then the claimant's sins corresponding to the dues owed would be transferred to him." Another report in the *Sahāh Muslim* says: "All the sins of the martyr would be condoned save a loan." The Prophet added that Gabriel conveyed it to him. Another report included in the *Sahāh Muslim* says: "The Prophet asked his companions, 'Do you know who is a destitute, a pauper?' The companions, replied, 'We call him a destitute who is penniless, without resources.' The Prophet then said, 'The destitute among my followers would be one who would have prayer and fasting and poor-due on the Judgement Day but he would have abused someone, made a false accusation against another, misappropriated someone's property, shed someone's blood or assaulted someone. His virtues would be given to the wronged persons and when these would have exhausted and there would still be some more dues, then the sins of the wronged persons would be heaped on him and he would be cast into the Hell.'"

In order to steer clear of this danger we need to be fair and just in our dealings. We should also know the injunctions of *shari'ah* in this regard and should abide by them.

We ought to contemplate on our acts and dealings in the light of these *ahadith* which also find a confirmation in the Quranic verses, and should apply our minds impartially to our past and present deeds. If there is any loan to be repaid or an adjustable claim pertaining to sale or purchase, undivided property or inheritance, or a liability in consequence of an injury caused to the feelings of a Muslim, encroachment on someone's rights, libel or backbiting, we should try to redress it in this world by clearing the dues or getting it pardoned willingly by the person concerned. Sometimes we make grievous mistakes in our mutual dealings and they continue to lie on us. These matters require to be given prior attention in the light of above-mentioned pronouncements of the holy Prophet.

4. We should, then, go all length to adopt cardinal virtues, attain purity of self and purge our heart from all faults and failings. Unrighteousness impedes our effort to receive benefit from the Prophetic teachings which constitute the surest way to adopt the 'hue' of Allah. Unvirtuousness makes man a slave of his desires, hideous like a devil, and poses the greatest danger for the health of one's faith and soul. Says the Qur'an:

"Hast thou seen him who has taken his caprice to be his god?" (45 : 23)

We should take the Qur'an and the *sunnah* as the two infallible standards for forming a judgement about the correctness of our own actions and the purification of our inner self.

A man may be exceptionally sagacious and clear-sighted but he can see his reflection only in a mirror. Hence a man is really fortunate if he is mindful of his own failings like pride, envy, greed, piggishness, pettiness, vindictiveness, fondness for the things worldly and filthy lucre and the tendency to disparage his Muslim brothers, and also tries to get rid of his weaknesses. To fight one's own vices, one has to be a bitter enemy unto them. He has also all the luck who can get a guide

perfect in spirit, able to warn his disciple about the latter's faults and failings and to show him the way of overcoming them. A man of God brightens the inner self of his disciples and makes it easy for them to get rid of their shortcomings by setting a personal example through his own unremitting fear of God and self-examination.

That was the easiest way during the days gone-by. Even erudite scholars used to seek the company of those perfect in soul even if the guide was not learned like them. They used to get a practical guidance in the purification of inner self from these guides and learnt the way to protect themselves from the ruses of Satan. Imām Ahmad b. Hanbal's son once pointed out to his father that he attended the discourses of persons far less well-versed than him, and who actually ought to learn from him. He added that this put him to shame and caused misunderstanding to others. Imām Ahmad replied, "My son, a man sits where it is profitable to his heart." There has never been a time, with all the vulgarity and worldliness, when the world was without elevated souls. But if anyone is unable to find the company of such a godly person, he ought to take stock of his own self, his leaning and desires, like a dispassionate observer and critic, and try to make himself aware of his own faults and failings. The Qur'ān says :

"Man shall be a clear proof against himself, latter ; even though he offers his excuses." (75 : 14-15)

There is not the least doubt that this would help a man to discover his own weaknesses. One should make every effort to overcome one's fault and failings with the help of the Scripture and the *sunnah* as well as in light of experiences and instructions of the spiritual guides of the *ummah* who have written innumerable treatises on the subject. Countless Muslims have derived benefit from such writings as, for example, the *Ihyā-ul-'Uloom* of Imām Gazzālī, the *Talbis-i-Iblīs* of Ibn Jauzi, *Aghathatul Lahfan fi Makayadish Shaytān* and *Madārijis Salikān bain Manāzil Iyāk n'abudū wa Iyāk nasta'yin* of Ibn Qayyim, *Jāmi al-'Uloom wal Hakam Sharh Khamsīn Haditha*

min Jawām'ie al-Kalim of Ibn Rajab, *Sirāt-ul-Mustaḳīm* of Saiyid Ahmad Shahīd and *Tarbiyatus Sālik* of Ashraf 'Alī Thānvi, which would be found extremely useful for the purpose.

Engaging oneself oftener in supplications and remembrance, being fearful of one's moral imperfections, sceptical habit of mind towards one's own inclinations and desires and avoiding the company of those who are heedless or indulge in immorality or else endeavour to find an excuse for their misdeeds would be helpful in one's self-correction. Says God :

“Whoso blinds himself to the remembrance of the All Merciful, to him We assign a Satan for comrade, and they bar them from the way.” (43 : 36).

When one has taken to the approved creed and worshipful acts, attained self-purification to the extent possible and cultivated the habit of protecting oneself against one's baser instincts, one should apply oneself to the study of holy Prophet's character and morals. The Prophet's way of life, his character and behaviour should be held as an ideal to be copied in every walk of life with a yearning to be blessed with the grace thus promised by God.

“Say (O Prophet): If you love God, follow me, and God will love you, and forgive you your sins.” (3 : 31).

5. A thorough knowledge of the three¹ religious practices, i. e., *salāt*, *saum* and *zakāt*, and the rules of *shari'ah* about acts permissible and impermissible, obligatory duties, incumbent acts, *sunnah*, matters commended or disapproved and the limits imposed by it is absolutely necessary for every believer. One should know the rules of *shari'ah* about the business or calling one is engaged in and act on them as a dutiful and God-fearing man apprehensive of the hereafter. Any book of *fiqh* written by a trustworthy scholar and approved by a reliable religious teacher of the time should be studied from time to time.

6. Many amongst us are scrupulous about the supplications

1. The rules pertaining to *hajj* being difficult cannot be mastered without a deep study.

mentioned in the *ahādīth* for recital at the time of performing ablutions, entry in the mosque and exit from it, going to answer the call of nature, retiring for sleep and at awakening, setting out for a journey and on return but there is always the danger that we may not be getting the merits and rewards promised by God, as stated by the holy Prophets, for the simple reason that we might be reciting these supplications in a routine manner by force of habit. There are several acts of worship, commonly known to be obligatory or necessary. A great merit is attached to all of them but their full reward depends on the doer's conviction, zeal and hope for the recompense promised for them. The holy Prophet has said that :

"One who fasts during Ramadhān with the trust in God's promises and the hope of being recompensed for it, his previous sins will be forgiven."

"And one who keeps vigil during the *lailatul qadr* with the trust in God's promises and the hope of being recompensed for it, his previous sins will be forgiven."

Many of us are not very careful about the difference between the acts of prayer and habitual actions. The result is that a great many of our orisons and prayers like *salāt*, *saum*, *zakāt* and *hajj* tend to become a settled disposition, devoid of their spirit and lack what may be called faith and awareness.¹

A living awareness of the merits of these acts of worship, complete trust in their efficacy as if they were rooted in the heart, sincere devotion with which these orisons were performed and the importance given to them for gaining popinquity to God were the reasons that accounted for the difference

1. *Imān* (faith) and *Ihtisāb* (awareness) have been explained by the Prophet in a *hadīth*, handed down by 'Abdullah b. 'Umar b. Al-'As, in which he says: "Forty acts are there and the most meritorious amongst all of them is to give a goat to someone with the intention of helping him. One who acts on anyone of these with absolute trust in God's promises and the recompense promised therefor, God will make him enter paradise."

between the companions of the Prophet and the pious souls of times goneby, on the one hand, and the later-day Muslims on the other. When the companions performed ablution, which we do several times every day in a mechanical way, they also recalled this saying of the holy Prophet :

When an obedient Muslim performs ablution and washes his face then the sins he had committed with his eyes are washed away ; and when he washes his hands, the sins committed by his hands are washed away ; down to the time when he emerges cleansed of all his sins.”¹

They placed such a trust in everything told by the Prophet as if they had seen it with their own eyes. Their ardent desire to win the promised merits made them perform all those virtuous acts. When they warmly welcomed a brother Muslim or even engaged in their business or trade or did anything else, they used to yearn for the goodly reward promised by God. This turned their prayers and supplications into an enthusiastic devotion and loyalty to God and thus all of their devine services took the shape of complete submission to God. If we could also cultivate the same awareness, perform all the divine services, supplications and acts of worship with the same certitude of faith and constant awareness, we would see their luminous effect in our lives. But this does not depend on worshipful acts alone. Our earnings should be lawful and the means we adopt for them whether they be service, business, farming or any other trade should be adopted with the intention of winning the pleasure of God. This is what the holy Prophet wanted to drive home in one of his pronouncements, accepted unanimously by all the scholars of *hadīth*, and with which Imām Bukharī commences his great work :

“ Acts depend on the intentions and everyone will be recompensed in accordance with what he has intended.

This *hadīth* is one of those which form the very basis of religion. “This *hadīth* forms one-third of knowledge.”, says Imām Shāfe-ī, “ and has a bearing upon seventy sections of

1. *Tirmidhi*.

jurisprudence.”

The greatest reward and an unforgettable favour of the prophethood of Muhammad, on whom be peace, which was ever sought by man and which has been articulated in such a simple manner, yet carrying the deepest import, is *niyat* or intention in the *hadith* cited above.

It means that every act performed with the purpose of submitting oneself to God in all sincerity is the means of gaining propinquity to God. It takes man up to the highest reaches of faith. It really means an unadulterated faith, free of every suspicion and doubt whether it takes the form of fighting in the way of God, or the governance of a land, or making use of the world and its conveniences, or fulfilment of one's rightful desires, or earning one's living in a lawful way, or taking pleasure from innocent amusements, or else enjoying a married life. Contrarily every devotion or religious service would be deemed as a worldly affair if it lacks the desire to seek the pleasure of God, is indifferent to divine injunctions, and smacks of forgetfulness of the hereafter, no matter whether it is observance of obligatory prayers or migration or fighting or remembrance or even martyrdom. Everyone with this sort of divine service, be he a scholar or a fighter in the way of God, would find himself denied of the recompense of his efforts. Rather his insincere effort may prove calamitous for him, barring his way to the presence of God.¹

One of the innumerable favours of the holy Prophet on mankind consists of his bridging the wide gap dividing religious and worldly spheres of human activity. The two had been divided into separate camps, one apart from the other, segregated and isolated from each other by a great divide or rather both were antagonistic to one another like two adversaries—hostile and inimical like those who are at daggers drawn. The Prophet made them compatible and complementary which now go together hand in hand. The holy Prophet was a harbinger

1. The various compilations of *hadith* amply bear out the reasons for it.

of unity as well as the revealer of a message of cheer and warning. He caused the two warring camps of humanity to stand united in search of faith, clemency to mankind and pleasure of God, by teaching man to beseech the Lord in these comprehensive words :

“ Our Lord ! give us good in the world and good in the hereafter, and save us from the torment of fire.”

(2 ; 201).

“ Lo ! my worship and my sacrifice and my living and my dying—all belong to Allah, Lord of the worlds.”

(6 : 163).

It meant that the life of a Muslim was not a combination of two discordant, incompatible spheres of activity. It was rather a united whole overlaid with the spirit of worship and introspection, complete trust and faith in God and submission to His will. This embraces the entire field of human activity demanding absolute sincerity, true purpose and an intention to win the pleasure of God. It also requires that every act is to be performed after the example set by the prophets of God. This also demonstrates that the holy Prophet was a messenger of unity and love, a warner and a messenger of glad tidings who converted the entire life of man into a devotion to God by denying the existence of any cleavage between the spiritual and temporal spheres of human affairs. He demolished the wedge between men of religion and those of the world and caused all of them to unite their efforts for obtaining the pleasure of God and service of humanity. It was because of him that the world could see ascetics who wore crown on their heads and warriors who spent their nights in devotions and prayers.¹

7. It is advisable to cultivate the habit of reciting such portion of the Qur’ān as may be convenient to one and this should not be missed save in the case of illness or for reasons unavoidable. The time spent in reading the holy Scripture should be deemed as the most worthy and well-spent for God

1. *Muhammad Rasūlullah*, p. 458

says about the Qur'ān : " Falsehood comes not to it from before it, nor from behind it." (41 : 42).

While engaged in the recital of the Qur'ān we should deem ourselves as nearest to God ; overawed by His Majesty, ready to melt down like mountains about which it is said that :

"Had we brought down this Qur'ān upon a mountain, you would have seen it humble itself and 'break asunder for fear of Allah." (59 : 21).

And God also says :

" God has sent down the fairest discourse as a Book, consimilar in its oft-repeated (verses) whereat shiver the skins of those who fear their Lord ; then their skins, and their hearts soften to the remembrance of God." (39 : 23).

The benefits derived from the Qur'ān left a visible mark on the lives of the pious souls of olden times that helped them to get ahead of others. This was achieved by them not merely by pondering over the verses of the Qur'ān or a deep study of the wisdom contained in it but because of their cognition of Divine Majesty and appreciation of the sublimity of Divine revelation which surpassed the charm of human expression.

Two things are helpful in deriving full benefit from the Qur'ān. First, a knowledge of the merits of the Qur'ān ; its recitation and its competence to create a direct relationship between man and his Creator, and the implicit belief in the rewards that can be had through it in the hereafter. Secondly, one should get oneself acquainted with the way the purer in soul, saints and scholars used to recite the Qur'ān ; how they used to deliberate on it and what precautions they took in its recitation.

It is also helpful, as the experience has shown, that we should create a direct link with the Qur'ān by discarding all the intermediaries that stand between us and the Qur'ān. Nor we should allow anything to stick to our minds that may guide our understanding of the Qur'ān into a beaten groove or the interpretation given by a particular exegete, old or new. We should also not allow our own predilections or the modern thought and

trends to conceal from our view the beauty and charm of the divine revelation. Dependence on any particular exegete projects the thought and personality of a forceful commentator in such a way that the reader is unduly impressed by the interpretation peculiar to his way of thought and reasoning.

There are, however, a few exceptions to this general rule. The commentaries elucidating the correct import of difficult words and passages in the light of explanations given by the Prophet himself, his companions or the great jurists of Islam, dictionaries, glossaries and similar other works which have to be consulted for an in-depth study of the Qur'ān, particularly by the non-Arabs, fall in this category. While reciting the Qur'ān one should be particularly attentive and feel himself as if in attendance to the Author of the Scripture. These norms also do not apply to the exegetes, authors and researchers in the Qur'ānic subjects who have of necessity to undertake an exhaustive study for gaining a thorough knowledge of it. However, every Muslim has neither the time nor necessity to make himself adept in the subject.

8. It is essential to go through the works on *ḥadīth* and biography of the Prophet with the intention of creating a heart-felt attachment with the holy Prophet and for taking to his ways, manners and behaviour in every walk of life. One in love with anybody is always mindful of his beloved and tries to know all about him. Refreshing the memory of the loved one being a sure sign of affection and attachment, the saints and pious souls were never forgetful of the holy Prophet. Their ardent love for the Prophet is still capable of transmitting the warmth of their hearts to those who go through their reminiscences and biographies. Such works can be especially beneficial to those who have an affectionate devotion to the holy Prophet.¹

1. The books recommended in this connection are *As-Shifā fī Huqūq-il-Mustafā* by Qazī 'Ayyāz and *Jilāul Iḥām* by Ibn Qayyim for those knowing Arabic. In Urdu one may go through *Khutbāt-i-Madrās* by
(Continued on page 26)

Repeated recitation of *durūd*, the prescribed benediction for the holy Prophet, is highly beneficial since the Qur'ān has attached great importance to it.

“God and His angels bless the Prophet. O believers, do you also bless him, and pray him peace.” (33 : 56).

The Prophet is reported to have said that :

“One who blesses me once is blessed ten times by God.”¹

Also, that :

“He will be nearest to me on the Day of Judgement who blesses me most.”²

Abī b. K'ab once asked the Prophet. “Do I need only to bless you, ?” “Yes”, replied the Prophet “this would solve all your difficulties and cause your sins to be forgiven.”³

9. There are also remembrances and litanies. We should try to engage ourselves in some of these remembrances regularly and also recite those for particular occasions, a few of which have been given elsewhere.

10. The biographies of such saints, savants and jurists of Islam whose faith, love for the Prophet, knowledge of the scripture and the *sunnah*, self-purification and anxiety for the hereafter is well-known, should also be regarded studiously. Ibn Jawzī, the reputed critic and scholar of *hadīth* writes in the *Said-ul-Khatir*.

“I have found that the study of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and of *hadīth* are not sufficient to make the heart receptive.

The way to it is to study the biographies of the earlier

Continued from page 25)

Maulānā Syed Sulaimān Nadwī, *Rahmatul-lil-'Ālamīn* of Qazi Mohammad Sulaimān Mansūrpūrī, *Al-Nabī-ul-Khātīm* by Maulānā Syed Manāzīr Ahsan Gilānī, Recitation of eulogies like those of Jāmi and Qudsi in Persian and of Muhsin Kakorwī, Iqbāl and Zafar 'Alī Khān in Urdu can be helpful in reviving the emotional fervour of love for the holy Prophet. *Pathway to Medina* by the author can also be of benefit for the purpose.

1. *Muslim*.
2. *Tirmidhi*.
3. *Ibid*.

men of God which are still capable of moving one's heart. Mere knowledge of the permissible and prohibited acts is not of much help in touching a chord of one's heart. The holy Prophet's acts and doings as well as the behaviour of the saints of olden days can only tug at the heart-strings since they had translated the commandments of the *shari'ah* into their lives. Their actions and behaviours did not conform merely to the outer shape of these injunctions but tried to get to the very spirit of these commandments. What I am stating here, I have experienced myself and seen that normally the scholars of *hadith* try to master the chain of authorities in the narration of *ahadith*; likewise the jurists pay more attention to the reasons and arguments by which they may be able to get the better of their adversaries. How can these things soften the heart? In the days gone-by the people used to call upon those purer of heart and perfect in spirit in order to study their demeanour and manners.....not for gleaning knowledge from them but for the fact that the conduct and deportment of these elevated souls were the end results of their knowledge. This has to be clearly understood and the study of the lives of saints of old made a part of the study of *hadith* and *fiqh*, for this alone can stir one's heart."¹

Ibn Jawzī writes at another place in the same book :

"I have written a treatise describing the life and character, morals and spiritual attainments of every heavenly-minded soul of the olden times. One of these is about Hasan Basrī and the others are about Sufyān Thaurī, Ibrahīm b. Adham, Bishr Hāfī, Imām Ahmad b. Hanbal and M'arūf Karkhī. One can achieve one's objective only by the grace of God, but ignorance is always an impediment in taking to the right course. These two are like the drover (driving the herd) and the forerunner (leading the herd) while the heart of man

1. Ibn Jawzī, *Said-ul-Khatir*, Darul Fikr, Damascus, 1960, Vol. II, pp. 302-3.

in-between the two does not want to make any move by itself. One can reach one's destination if both the drover and the forerunner are in action.....God ! keep us away from indolence and lethargy.”¹

We should not be the least cynical about these men of God, the missionaries of Islam, who were successful in bringing the whole nations and countries to the fold of Islam; we should rather acknowledge their service to us; we should pray for them and pass over if we happen to come across any fault or human weakness in any one of them, for no man is free of human failing. God has praised such pure-hearted souls in these words :

“And those who came (into the faith) after them, say : Our Lord ! Forgive us and our brethren who were before us in the faith, and place not in our hearts any rancour toward those who believe. Our Lord ! Thou art Full of Pity, Merciful.” (59 : 10)

The verse quoted here teaches us to be very careful about those who preceded us in faith. This is also demanded by the etiquette taught by the Qur'an and the practice of the holy Prophet. We have to be too careful in passing a verdict about another Muslim; we should neither be hasty nor emotional, nor yet express any definite opinion about our brothers unless we are sure of it and have formed a view on the basis of reliable and positive evidence. God had advised us that :

“Believers, if an evil-doer brings you a piece of news inquire first into its truth, lest you should wrong others unwittingly and then repent of what you have done.” (49:6).

11. Whatever be our engagements, we ought to devote a bit of our time to preaching and calling the people to the way of God. This was the primary objective of prophethood and it was for this purpose that the Divine scriptures were revealed and the *sunnah* of the last Prophet was brought forth. God has said :

1. *Said-ul-Khatir, op. cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 303-3.

“You are the noblest nation that has ever been raised up for mankind. You enjoin justice and forbid evil. You believe in Allah.” (3 : 110)

The Divine writ also says :

“Let there become of you a nation that shall speak for righteousness, enjoin justice and forbid evil. Such men shall surely triumph.” (3 : 104)

But the preaching and giving a call for reformation and righteousness does not require any rigid or inflexible procedure to be followed by all. It is a duty incumbent upon all of us, but there is no fixed method or system to be followed by everybody.

The Prophet Noah says :

“My Lord ! I have called my people by night and by day.”
(71 : 5)

And again :

“Then indeed I called them openly; then indeed I spoke publicly unto them, and I spoke unto them secretly.”
(71 : 9)

The prophet of Islam was advised thus :

“Call thou to the way of the Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and reason with them in the better way.”
(16 : 125).

It is a duty incumbent upon us, an obligation imposed by our religion, that we should not be indifferent to the moral and social condition of the Muslim peoples; we should share their sorrows and delights like the members of one family spread all over the face of this earth. The Prophet is reported to have said.

“Muslims are like a (human) body in respect of their mutual love and affection and kindly feelings; if any limb is afflicted with pain all the remaining parts of the body share the affliction through fever and restlessness.”¹

The sea of troubles in which Muslims happen to be placed everywhere should make our hearts bleed and the persecution of some others simply for their attachment to Islam should deepen our anxiety for them. Let these hardships revive our sense of

1. *Bukhārī and Muslim*

Islamic brotherhood and strengthen the solidarity of Islam for assisting those who are working for the victory of faith, enforcement of *shari'ah* as the law of the land in Muslim countries and for regaining our lost power and prestige. This is the only way open to the Muslims for being feared and respected by their adversaries, for rooting out corruption from the face of earth and for bringing man back to the obedience of his Lord and Master.

“And fight them until persecution is no more, and Allah’s religion reigns supreme.” (8 : 39)

12. Lastly, contemplation upon finite nature of the world and all it contains, the short span of man’s life and the inevitability of death is the most effective means for softening the heart, leading a life of moderation and contentment and getting rid of airy hopes and aspirations. The Prophet is on record that :

“Keep the remembrance of death, the shatterer of pleasures.”²

Meditation upon death, which should take some of our time, should cause us to worry about a happy ending since our ultimate success depends on virtuousness at the point of death. All those gnostics, saints and men perfect of spirit whose abiding popularity is a witness to their nearness to God and whose miracles are commonly spoken of had been so very anxious of entering the portals of death with their faith intact that they never lost sight of it even for a moment. They never took pride in their virtuous actions nor placed reliance on their own efforts. They had always this pronouncement of Prophet fixed in their minds.

“Abu Huraira relates that the Prophet said ; ‘None of you shall earn salvation through his deeds ?’ The companions asked, ‘And you too, O Prophet of Allah ?’ ‘Yes, myself also,’ replied the Prophet, ‘save that the grace of Allah envelops me. Take the right path and create cohesion ; strive in the morning and in the evening and in a part of night also ; take to moderation and you will reach your destination.’”³

It would be appropriate that this *hadith* calling attention to the need of Divine grace for ultimate success should become the starting point of our self-education to live as true believers.

1. *Bukhārī*

2. *Tirmidhi*

3. *Bukhārī*

II

CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAM

Every living thing in this world has certain distinctive traits of its own, some identifying marks of its personality which are known as its characteristics. This is true of everything whether it be an individual, group, community, nation, religion or a school of thought. All these have their typical characteristics and therefore the question arises what are the distinctive features and specific lineaments of Islam. Before we go into the details of its teachings, injunctions and directions, we ought to know about its characteristics for this is the only natural way to our complete acceptance of Islam.

We have first to realise the fact that this faith has not reached us through sages and wiseheads, jurists and moralists, conquerors and kings, philosophers and theorists or politicians and national leaders. It has been communicated to us by the prophets of God who used to receive divine revelations, of whom the last was Muhammad (peace be upon whom), and this is alluded to in the verse revealed to him on the day of 'Arafāt during his Farewell Pilgrimage :

“This day I have perfected your religion for you and have completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you ISLAM as religion.” (5 : 3)

And, as for the holy Prophet, the Qur'ān testifies :

“Nor doth he speak of (his own) desire ; It is naught save a Revelation revealed.” (53 : 3-4)

1. The emphasis placed primarily in this religion is on the creed of monotheism ; from Adam to Muhammad (peace be upon them) every prophet demanded faith in this creed ; they were averse to making any compromise in this regard or to give up the least part of it. To them virtuous living and ethical conduct, moderation, goodness, worthy social set up and righteous form of government had no worth or merit unless one also subscribed to the creed preached by them. This creed was the end and purpose of life for each prophet. Their endeavour throughout their lives was to propagate and establish this basic creed. In fact, it constituted the dividing line between the thought, character and labours of the prophets of God on the one hand, and national leaders, politician and revolutionaries, on the other.¹

Qur'ān is the only scripture free from every interpolation ; the only revelation from God faithfully depicting the characters of the prophets. It is the only Book on which complete reliance can be placed, whether we look at it from historical or a rational view-point, for showing us the right path in every time and clime. It contains numerous illustrations throwing light on the issue under discussion.

The verses describing forbearance and long-suffering nature of Abraham are the most prominent in delineating the characteristic features of the prophets of God.

“Abraham was mild, imploring, penitent” (11 : 75)

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1. The decadence of faith in the modern times has so disheartened the people that anyone giving a call for revolution or challenging an established authority is accepted as a leader without questioning his lack of faith. Those who dare raise this question are not unoften dubbed as the agents of imperialist powers. Such a way of thinking has nothing to do with the traits and characteristics born out of prophetic teachings.

And this is how a righteous community follows in the footsteps of Abraham.

“There is a goodly pattern for you in Abraham and those with him, when they told their folk ; Lo ! we are guiltless of you and all that ye worship beside Allah. We have done with you. An there hath arisen between us and you hostility and hate for ever until ye believe in Allah only—save that which Abraham promised his father (when he said) ; I will ask forgiveness for thee¹, though I own nothing for thee from Allah—Our Lord ! In Thee we put our trust, and unto Thee we turn repentant, and unto Thee is the journeying.” (60 : 4)

The importance attached to the creed as a principle governing friendship and enmity of the believers is adequately demonstrated by the *Surat-al-Kafirūn*. This *surah* was revealed at the time when the obtaining situation demanded milder attitude towards the Quraysh of Mecca, at least till such time as Islam had gained strength and the tempest of persecution against Muslims had cooled down; yet the Qur’ān makes the holy Prophet declare openly to all :

“ Say : O disbelievers !

I worship not that which ye worship ;
Nor worship ye that which I worship ;
And I shall not worship what ye worship ;
Nor will ye worship what I worship ;
Unto you your religion, and unto me my
religion,” (109 : 1-6)

If the difference of creed merited to be ignored for anyone it was Abū Tālib who had heroically defended the Prophet throughout his life. The biographers of the Prophet are agreed

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1. Lest some people may question why Abraham promised to pray for his father who was an infidel, one should turn to verses 9 : 113-14 wherein Abraham did pray for his father, but when he came to know that his father was an enemy of God, he declared himself quite of him—an example to be followed for all times to come.

that when the Meccan pagans began persecuting the holy Prophet, Abū Tālib who happened to be the head of the family, took the side of the Prophet despite repeated protests by the Meccans, and did not agree to relinquish his parental duty. However, authentic reports have it on record that when Abū Tālib was breathing his last, the Prophet went to him and found Abū Jahl and ‘Abdullah b. Abī Ummya sitting by his side. The Prophet implored Abū Tālib, “O my uncle ! say : There is no god save Allah and I shall be a witness to thee unto Allah.” Abū Jahl and Ibn Abī Ummya intervened to say : “Abū Tālib, would you abjure the faith of your father ‘Abdul Muttalib ?” At last Abū Tālib died with the words on his lips : “I believe in the faith of ‘Abdul Muttalib.” Once ‘Abbās asked the Prophet whether Abū Tālib’s sacrifices in defending him with scant regard to the displeasure of his kinsmen would be of any benefit to him. The Prophet replied, “ I found him in the blazing fire and bought him to the sweltering heat.”¹

Muslim relates on the authority of ‘Āyesha that once she asked the Prophet, “O Apostle of God ! Will Ibn Jud‘ān be recompensed for their virtuous deeds like feeding the poor and the needy in the days of pagan past ?” The Prophet replied, “No. The benefits w’ont accrue to him since he never said : Lord ! forgive me my sins on the Day of Judgement.”²

Another incident related by ‘Āyesha clarifies the issue still further. She says, “ The Prophet set out for Badr and when he had reached Harratul Wabrah, a man known for his courage and intrepidity called upon him. The companions were glad to see him since the Muslim army consisted of only 313 troops and the induction of such an experienced soldier within their ranks would have been invaluable at that juncture. The man, however, told the Prophet that he wanted to join the Muslim force in order to get some booty of war. The Prophet asked him if he had faith in Allah and His Prophet. The man who replied in negative was asked by the Prophet to go back since

1. *Sahih Muslim, Kitābul Imān.*

2. *Ibid.*

he did not want any help from a pagan. 'Āyesha further relates that the newcomer went back but returned when the Muslim army had reached Shajarah. He repeated his earlier request and got the previous reply from the Prophet. He went away and called upon the Prophet once again at Baidā'. On being asked again about his faith, he replied in affirmative and then he was allowed to accompany the Muslim army".¹

2. All the missionary activities including even armed struggles launched by every prophet, of whom the last Prophet was the most distinguished, were guided by one and the same objective—to gain pleasure of God Almighty. This was their ruling passion and the only end in sight which never allowed any worldly consideration to deflect them from their chosen path. They never fought for power or authority, dominion or riches, affinity or vendetta or for any other worldly objective.

The prayer of the Prophet at Tāif after the brutal reception accorded to him by the people there, reflects the end and purpose of prophethood. He had not succeeded in his mission; not a single soul in Tā'if had given faith to him; and he was extremely disheartened. It was in these gloomy circumstances that he raised his hands to implore God :

“O Allah ! to Thee I complain of my weakness, resourcelessness and humiliation before these people. Thou art the Most Merciful, the Lord of the weak, and my Master. To whom wilt Thou entrust me ? To one estranged, bearing ill-will, or, an enemy given power over me ?”

But the prophetic character groomed and caressed by the Providence did not allow him to go on complaining in this manner. He continued his prayer to say :

“If Thou art not wroth on me, I care not, for Thy favour is abundant for me.”

Let us now turn to Noah, one of the great prophets, who continued his mission for a pretty long time. The Qur'ān says about him :

1. *Shahīh Muslim, Kitāb-ul-Imān*

And he continued with them for a thousand save fifty years." (29 : 14)

The Qur'ān also tells us that Noah had been preaching the true doctrine of monotheism to his people without sparing any pains. He is reported to have said :

"He said : my Lord ! verily I have called my people night and day." (71 : 5)

He also says :

"Then verily I have called unto them publicly : then, verily I spoke unto them openly, and secretly (also) I addressed them." (71 : 8-9)

But what was the result of his life-long labour ?

"And these had not believed with him save a few". (11 : 40)

Noah was, however, not broken-hearted at it nor considered his labour to be fruitless. Nor yet Noah's failure meant any difference in his status as a great Prophet or his propinquity to God ; he had completed his mission, disseminated the message of God to the people and fulfilled the obligation with which he had been charged. This is how he was rewarded by God.

"And left for him among the later folk (the salutation) ;
Peace be unto Noah among the peoples !
Lo ! thus do We reward the good.
Lo ! he is one of Our bondmen believing."

(37 : 78-81)

Addressing those engaged in the task of propagating the message of God, the Qur'ān says :

"As for that Abode of the Hereafter We assign it unto those who seek not oppression in the earth, nor yet corruption. The sequel is for those who are God-fearing." (28 : 83)

This does not mean that a Muslim should abandon the means necessary for successful preaching and delivery of his message or for removing the obstacles in his way, or weakening the forces of corruption and oppression on earth. There is nothing to discourage him from striving to bring about a spiritual-moral society so very essential for acceptance of the truth by the

people. Monasticism has no place in Islam; actually, the believers and the virtuous toilers are promised to be ultimately blessed with power and authority.

“Allah hath promised such of you as believe and do good works that He will surely make them succeed (the present rulers) in the earth even as He caused those who were before them to succeed (others); and that He will surely establish for them their religion which he hath approved for them, and will give them in exchange safety for their fear. They serve Me. They ascribe no thing as partner unto Me. Those who disbelieve henceforth, they are the miscreants”. (24 : 55).

The Qur’ān urges the believers to fight in the way of God :
 “And fight until persecution is no more, and religion is all for Allah.” (8 : 39)

It also says :

“Those who, if We give them power in the land, establish worship and pay the poor due and enjoin kindness and forbid iniquity And Allah’s is the sequel of events.”
 (22 : 41)

God has undoubtedly promised power and authority to the believers but on the condition that they become the very embodiment of virtue and godliness. Their aim should be the pleasure of God and not attainment of authority, for power and prestige are the reward and not the means to achieve righteousness. This is why the Qur’ān tells the believers :

“Faint not nor grieve, for ye will overcome them if ye are (indeed) believers.” (3 : 39)

The point is made abundantly clear by the Qur’ān’s repeated exhortations to attain a whole heart which alone merits the pleasure of God :

“The day when wealth and sons avail not (any man), save him who bringeth unto Allah a whole heart.”
 (26 : 88-89).

Abraham is praised by God for his heart which was free from all taints of vice : “When he came unto his Lord with a

whole heart" (37 : 84). For everything embedded in a heart that lacks that quality is more often raised to the level of God, it becomes an object of adoration and a partner in the love and regard that befits God alone. One has to be ever careful of it. Warning the believers against this human failing, the Qur'an says :

"Hast thou seen him who chooseth for his god his own lust ?" (25 : 43).

The holy Prophet is reported to have said, "Satan percolates in the veins of Adam's sons like the blood."¹

3. The third characteristic of this religion is that the prophets of God who are vouchsafed the monotheistic creed, the divine message and the law are extremely sensitive in regard to them. Whatever be the circumstances or demands of strategy, they never agree to the least amendment or change in the message preached by them. There is never any room for compromise on this issue. God commands the last of the prophets :

"Promulgate thou what thou art commanded, and turn away from the associators." (15 : 94)

Another time the Prophet is told :

"O Messenger ! preach thou whatever has been sent down to thee from thy Lord ; and if thou dost not, then thou hast not preached His message. Allah shall protect thee from men. Allah does not guide a disbelieving people." (5 : 67)

The Prophet is also informed of the aims of disbelievers :

"Fain would they that thou shouldest be pliant, so that they will be pliant." (68 : 9)

The holy Prophet never conceived of any compromise in the matter of *tauhīd*, the Oneness of God, nor he made any concession even in the case of duties and obligations imposed by faith. His indignant repudiation of all such suggestions marks a departure from the usual compromising attitude of political leaders for achieving their ends in every age. What these leaders consider to be practical wisdom has no place in the disposition

1. *Bukhārī, Muslim*

of the prophets. After Tā'if was captured a deputation of the Thaqīf, the second most important tribe of Arabia after Quraysh, came to Medina and requested the Prophet that their chief diety, the idol of al-Lāt, should not be destroyed for three years since its existence consecrated the city and made it a place of pilgrimage for the pagan Arabs. The Apostle refused; then they reduced the period of its continued existence to two, and then to one year; and at last asked to let the idol remain untouched for a month after their return to Tā'if. But the Prophet rejected their request and ordered Abū Sufyān, who had his relatives in Tā'if, and another resident of the city, Moghīra b. Shu'eba, to destroy the idol forthwith. Thereafter the Thaqīf delegation requested the Prophet to exempt them from the obligation of offering prayers. To this the Prophet replied, "Nothing remains of a religion which has no prayer." Abū Sufyān and Moghīra b. Shu'eba accompanied the deputation of Tā'if when it returned to its home, smote al-Lāt with a pickaxe and broke it into pieces. Thereupon the people of Tā'if accepted Islam; not one of them remained attached to paganism.¹

The prophets of God always employ the metaphor that is in consonance with their message. They demand unquestioning conviction in the hereafter, give the glad tidings of Paradise and warn of the horrors of Hell. They always speak of Heaven and Hell as if both are within their sight. Instead of advancing reasons for the acceptance of their call, they simply ask to give faith to these mute realities beyond the ken of human perception.

The times when the prophets were sent by God, the people were not devoid of abstruse thoughts and philosophies: their ideas and ideals were more often materialistic in nature, though peculiar to the particular age and circumstances. The fact is that every era coins its own idioms and phraseologies for the cherished thoughts and concepts of the people. The prophets not only possessed an understanding of such verbalisms but they also knew that these were no more than popular jargons. They

1. *Zād al-Ma'ād*, Vol. I, pp. 458-59

did not employ them for preaching their message ; they rather explained the nature and attributes of God and persuaded the people to find credence in the angels, the will of God, the life-after-death and similar other matters. Their call was never apologetic ; it boldly proclaimed that the acceptance of their call was the only way to attain the pleasure of God and salvation in the hereafter.

The method adopted by the Prophets is fully illustrated by the second pledge of 'Aqabah when 73 persons from Yathrib came to Mecca for performing the *hajj* and met the Prophet at 'Aqabah. The Prophet was accompanied by his uncle 'Abbās who had still not accepted Islam. The Prophet recited some verses of the Qur'ān, asked the congregation to have faith in One God and invited them to accept Islam. Thereafter he said, "I ask for your allegiance with an assurance that you would protect me in the same way as you would protect your own women and children." The Ansār, on their part, demanded to give the word that the Prophet would not return to his own clan. The Ansār were, however, not simpletons : they knew that what was being demanded of them meant provoking enmity of entire Arabia. One of the Ansars, 'Abbās b. 'Ubadah, pointed out the perils of the venture to his comrades, but they unanimously replied that they would give refuge to the Prophet even at the cost of sacrificing their all, their family members and leaders. At the same time they asked the Prophet: "O Apostle of Allah, what will we get in return for redeeming our pledge?"

This was the most crucial moment. Had there been a political leader or a worldly-wise man in place of the Prophet, he would have surely replied that they would be united and made a power to reckon with, their importance will be felt by all the tribes and they would have a place of honour in the country. And, all this could have been easily foreseen ; rather, there were reasons to predict the possibility of such an assertion. One of those coming from Yathrib to meet the Prophet had already hinted at the likely consequence when he had said, "When we came to you our tribes were more disunited than any other people. We hope that God would unite us through you. Now

we shall go back and present your message to them ; invite them to accept the faith we have been convinced. If God unites them under your leadership, nobody would be more respected and more influential than you.”¹

But the only reply given by the Messenger of God to the question ; “What will we got in return?” was simply : “Paradise.” And it was on this promise that they asked the Prophet to extend his hand for taking the oath of allegiance from them.²

Such is the ardent faith of the prophets that they never allow the least deviation in the Law promulgated by them : no recommendation can ever make them to defer or exempt anybody, whether a friend or foe, from its obligations. A women of Bānī Makhzūm was apprehended on the charge of theft. Usāmah b. Zayd, to whom the Prophet was well-disposed, approached the Prophet to intercede on her behalf but he got the reply : “Do you speak to me about the bounds placed by God?” Thereafter the Prophet addressed a gathering, saying, “The people before you were destroyed because they used to overlook when a high-born or a man of substance among them committed a theft but when the poor or the weak did the same, they chastised him as ordained in the Law. I swear by Him who holds my life that if Fātimah bint Muhammad had committed theft I would have amputated her hands.”³

The same spirit and ardour for faith was inherited by the Prophet’s companions and their descendants who enforced the Quranic injunctions and provisions of the Law with complete disregard to consequences or momentary gains and losses. A prominent example of maintaining the supremacy of the Law is furnished by the decision of the second Caliph, ‘Umar in the case of Jablah b. Ayham, a prince of Ghassān. He came to Medina with an entourage of five hundred persons belonging to the tribes of ‘Akk and Ghassān, with a pomp and show that even

1. *Sirat Ibn Hishām* I, p. 429

2. *Ibid.*, p. 446

3. *Sahih Muslim*

the *purdah* observing ladies came out to witness his flamboyant procession and gaudy attire. When Caliph 'Umar proceeded for *hajj* Jablah b. Ayham also accompanied the Caliph. While Jablah was circumambulating the K'aba, a man of Banī Fazārah happened to step on his suspenders dragging the ground which fell down. Jablah slapped the man on his nose and thereafter a complaint was made to the Caliph. On being asked about the dispute Jablah replied that the complainant had tried to undress him and had this not occurred in the vicinity of the K'aba he would have cracked down on his face with the sword. Caliph 'Umar ordered him to compromise with the complainant through payment of a compensation, or else he would have to undergo the punishment. On being asked about the nature of punishment, Caliph 'Umar told Jablah that the complainant would be allowed to slap him on his nose. Jablah was astounded; he pleaded how could it be so; for, the complainant was a commoner while he was the chief and ruler of his tribe. Caliph 'Umar replied that Islam had made them equals and now there was nothing to distinguish him except the awe of God and good-doing. Jablah replied that he hoped to gain more respect by accepting Islam but it looked as if he had a greater honour in paganism. Caliph 'Umar, however, insisted that he should make a compromise failing which he should be ready to bear the consequences.

Finding the Caliph adamant, Jablah requested to be given some more time to think over the matter and then he decamped in the dead of night with his men and beasts. He went away to Syria leaving no trace of his camp by the time morning dawned in Mecca. After a long time Juthāmah b. Musāhiq Kanānī told the Caliph about Jablah's impressive court in Syria but Caliph 'Umar remarked: "He was a loser. He exchanged the world for hereafter; he sustained loss in his bargain."¹

This is not to say that the prophets of God are indifferent to the demands of prudence in their missionary work or that their exhortations are not appealing to the intellect. Neither the

1. *Futūh-ul-Buldān*, p. 142; *Tārikh Ibn Khaldūn*, Vol. II p. 281.

teachings of the Qur'ān nor the lives of the prophets support this view. God has said :

“And We sent not a messenger but with the speech of his people that he might expound the (message) to them.”
(14 : 4)

The word ‘speech’ in this verse does not signify merely language but includes style, manner and mode of expression as well as logical reasoning which are demonstrated by the way Prophet Joseph preached to his fellow prisoners and the conversation Abraham and Moses had with their kings and the peoples. The Qur'ān has, in fact, instructed every believer through the last and final Prophet of God to be nice in exhortation of the divine message.

“Call thou them to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation and argue with them with what is best.” (16 : 125)

Whenever the holy Prophet deputed his companions to a preaching mission, he always instructed them to be kind and considerate, to make the religion easy for the people and give them glad tidings. When he sent Ma'ād b. Jabal and Abū Mūsā Ash'arī to Yemen, he told them to make the things easy and not difficult, and to give the people glad tidings instead of making them frightened. The direction given by God to the Prophet in the holy Qur'ān reads :

“It was by the mercy of Allah that thou wast lenient with them (O Muhammad), for if thou hast been stern and fierce of heart they would have dispersed from around thee.” (3 : 159)

The Prophet often used to tell his companions: “You have been raised to make things easy and not difficult.”¹

The instances and directions pointing to this way of comportment are too numerous to be cited here.² Good and nice

1. *Bukhārī*, Volume I, p. 35

2. See Volume I of the Shah Waliullah's *Hujjat Allah-il-Bāligha* in this connexion.

behaviour has been a distinguishing feature of all the prophets of God. The Qur'an says after mentioning a number of prophets : " Those are they unto whom We gave the Scripture and command and prophethood."¹

All this talk about making things easy, however, pertains to teaching and preaching and not to the fundamental creed and the obligatory duties. The prophets are always firm and uncompromising in regard to the latter.

4. A prominent feature of prophethood and teachings of the apostles of God is that they place maximum emphasis on the hereafter, success in the afterlife and its blessings. They talk of it so frequently as if it were the core of their message. Anyone trying to study their lives without any pre-conceived notion would reach the conclusion that the end and purpose of their teachings is nothing but the hereafter, as if it were a living reality for them. This concept seems to be so dominant in their minds and thoughts that the divine blessings promised to the virtuous and forebodings of perdition to the wrongdoers keep them ever worried. It urges them to invite their fellow beings to accept the true faith and reform their morals just for the sake of success in the life to come.

It can be easily discerned from the lives of the prophets that their call to monotheism and forebodings of the hereafter are not meant merely as a moral imperative or a device for building a virtuous society which is undoubtedly a must for an Islamic or rather any healthy society. Howsoever important this may be, the method adopted by the messengers of God and their followers differs from other reformers. The faith of the prophets is an inborn, heartfelt spiritual apprehension of the divine truth which runs through their thoughts and feelings, character and conduct while advocacy of certain principles by the reformers is no more than mere acceptance of a doctrine for the social and moral good of the people. The difference between the two is self-evident requiring no further elucidation.

1. Q. 6: 190

5. The fifth point is that Allah is undoubtedly the absolute and only Lord and Master of the universe, and it is only He who is the Law Giver. Says the Qur'ān :

"The decision rests with Allah only." (12 : 40)

"Or have they partners (of Allah) who have made lawful for them in religion that which Allah allowed not." (42 : 21)

But the relationship between the Creator and the creature, the Deity and the worshipper is much more wider and deeper as well as closer and captivating than what can be expressed by the words like Lord and Master. The way Qur'ān speaks of the names, and attributes of God and the detailed and fascinating description¹ it gives, demonstrate that it does not require Allah to be accepted merely as the sole Ruler and Sovereign without any associates ; rather, the names and attributes of God oftener repeated² in the Qur'ān clearly seem to invite man to create a living awareness, a heartfelt love and regard and demand absolute submission to Him. The purpose clearly is that one should love God with one's heart and soul ; sing His praise on every occasion, day and night ; never lose the awareness of His presence ; inculcate an ever-present awe to guide one at every step ; direct one's supplications to Him alone ; and, be prepared to sacrifice one's all for His sake.

6. Another important feature determining the characteristics of the religion, which needs to be emphasised here, is that the messengers of God, in general, and the Last Prophet and the leader of the earlier apostles, in particular, are not to be regarded just as couriers to their people to whom they were sent simply for delivering the message. They were not despatch-bearers whose only business was to deliver the message without

1. The last three verses of chapter 59, *Surah al-Hashr* can be read to see the lovely description of God's attributes.
2. For instance, one may go through the verses like, "Those who believe are stauncher in their love for Allah" (2 : 165) and "Allah will bring a people whom He loveth and who love Him" (5 : 54) to gain an understanding of the supreme love and attachment of the prophets to God.

anything to do with their affairs, faith and morals or the individual and social life of the people to whom they conveyed their message. This misconception once prevailed among the people not aware of the worth and merit of prophethood and has now been revived again by those who deny the importance of *hadith* or are unduly impressed by Christian thoughts and western concepts.

Far from it, the messengers of God are the guides and exemplars for the entire humanity in all matters pertaining to morals, behaviour, gracefulness, discretion and discernment. They are accepted and approved by God. The prophets enjoy such a divine favour that their way of life, habits and behaviours became a model or standard to be followed by others. It is for this reason that to follow the example of the prophets, to take after their habits and behaviours and to act in accordance with the precedents set by them becomes the means to gain propinquity to God. One who is friends to them becomes an elect of God and one bearing ill-will to them is condemned as an enemy of God. This is the ordinance of God proclaimed by the Prophet of Islam.

“Say (O Mohammad, to mankind) : If you love Allah, follow me ; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. Allah is forgiving, Merciful.” (3 : 31)

Just the opposite are the bearings of tyrants and misbelievers, their modes and manners, which make man distant from God and invite God’s displeasure.

“And incline not toward those who do wrong lest the Fire touch you ; and ye have no protecting friends against Allah, and afterward ye would not be helped.”
(11 : 113)

The ways and manners of the prophets are recognised by the *shari’ah* as *khisal-i-firat* or natural dispositions and *sunan-ul-huda*, that is, the way of guidance. Divine law upholds prophetic practices as favoured observances and asks the believers to follow them. The usages and practices of the prophets exalt and elevate the character of man, for the reason that these enjoy

the approval of God,

“(This is the) colour of Allah, and who is better than Allah in colouring! We are His worshippers.” (2 : 138)

And this is why God prefers a certain mode, behaviour or practice over another style, manner or usage. The modes and behaviours acceptable to God are, thus, recommended by the *shari'ah* as the traits of the believers and natural disposition of man. Any habit that is at variance with the prophetic practice is looked down upon by the Law as an impress of the ignorant, a custom of the stupid and a way of the unbelievers. Both these are bearings and deportments of men possessing wisdom and intelligence, culture and refinement, but the one is the way of the prophets informed by divine guidance and the other of those denied that blessing. This principle regulates customs and conventions, manner of eating and drinking, mode of dressing and living, in short, everything that goes by the name of prophetic culture. In Islamic terminology this is known as the *sunnah*, the way of the holy Prophet, and covers a greater part of Islamic jurisprudence.¹

What has been stated here is true of all the messengers of God, but it assumes the greatest importance in the case of the last Prophet. A formal relationship, though valid in the eyes of law, is not enough. One has to have an emotional and spiritual affinity with him which transcends all other affiliations of kinship or rather the liking for one's own life and self. A *hadīth* of the Prophet says :

“None of you shall be a believer unless I am dearer to him than his own progeny and parents and all other persons,”²

In another *hadīth* the Prophet is reported to have said :

“None of you shall be a believer until I am dearer to him than his own self.”³

1. For details see the chapter the ‘Guides and Leaders of Humanity’ in the author's *Islamic Concept of Prophethood*, pp. 90-94.

2. *Bukhārī and Muslim*

3. *Musnad Ahmad*

One needs to be extremely cautious of all those pulls and predilections to the opposite direction which denumb the feelings of love and respect for the Prophet as the last and winsome guide of humanity, create an indifference to the study of his life and character, or, dissuade one to act on his precepts. An study of the Quranic *sūrah*s like *Ahzāb*, *Hujarāt* and *Fath* and reflection over the inclusion of *darūd* or benedictions for the Prophet in the daily prayers and supplications for the dead, its repeated commendation in the Qur'ān and the great number of *ahādīth* explaining the merit of invoking blessings on him make it plain that a Muslim is required to create a closer relationship with him than just a formal, perfunctory obedience to him. What is required is a spontaneous, deep and heartfelt love and regard for the holy Prophet as commanded by God: "That ye may believe in Allah and His apostle, and may assist and honour Him."¹

We can find some shining examples of such love in the behaviour of Khubayb b. 'Adiy and Zayd b. Dathinna in the expedition of a Rajī, reckless courage shown by Abū Dujāna and Talha in defending the Prophet in the battle of Uhad, the reply given by a woman of Banī Dinār on coming to know that the Prophet was safe and sound in the same battle and the highest marks of respect paid to the Prophet by his companions at Hudaibiya. It was this flame of love for the Prophet which had made Abū Sufyān, then still a pagan, to remark that he had never seen any man so much loved and adored as Muhammad (peace be upon him) was by his companions. Another chief of the Quraysh, 'Urwah b. Mas'ūd Thaqaffi, who had called upon the Prophet to negotiate a treaty of peace reported back to his people, "I have been to the courts of the kings and have seen the splendour of the Caesar and the Chosroes and the Negus, but never have I seen any king so revered as Muhammad (peace be upon him)

1. Q. 48:9

by his companions.”¹

All those men of God, the scholars and reformers of old, were pure of heart and sincere and honest, who held the ring of truth. The regeneration of the Muslim community brought about by them was due to an abundant degree of their love and regard for the holy Prophet. Similar ardent devotion to the Prophet and willingness to follow his example and that of his companions is a must for an enthusiastic compliance with the demands of the *shari'ah*. It is also necessary for self-introspection if one desires to find out one's own shortcomings for it constitutes the only way to cure oneself of all spiritual and moral evils, to purify one's self and to attain the perfection of spirit.

Such was the love for the Prophet which once ran like blood in the veins of the Muslims but now these tender feelings and sensitiveness have been deadened making them cold and dull.

1. Zayd b. Dathina was treacherously taken prisoner at ar-Raji by the tribes of Adhul and Qara and sold to Quraysh. When he was taken out for execution, a number of Qurayshites including Abū Sufyān gathered to witness the barbaric spectacle. Abū Sufyān asked Zayd, "Verily, for God's sake, O Zayd, don't you wish that Muhammad (peace be upon him) were in your place and you with your family?". "By God," replied Zayd, "I don't wish Muhammad (peace be upon him) to be hurt even by a thorn when I should be in sweet repose with my family." (*Ibn Hishām*, Vol. II, p. 172). In the other incident relating to the battle of Uhud, certain Muslims passed by a woman of Banī Dinār whose husband, brother and father had been killed in the battle. After she had been told of their death, she insisted, "Tell me first about the Prophet." The people replied, "Thanks God, the Apostle is safe". But she was not satisfied and demanded to see the Prophet herself. When she was brought to the Prophet she said, "Now that you are safe, every adversity is gone." (*Ibn Hishām*, Vol. II, p. 99). In the same battle Abū Dujānah leaned over the Apostle to shield him from arrows and Talha b. 'Ubaydullah protected the Prophet from the arrows shot by the enemy with his hands until his fingers bled profusely and his hands were palsied. (*Al-Isābah*).

Alas! the fire of love has fizzled out,
The Muslim is not but a heap of dust!

7. A unique characteristic of this religion is its perfection and abiding nature. It is apparant from the divine declaration made in the clearest terms, cited here, that the guidance pertaining to the creed and law and the things to which human salvation is anchored has been given its final shap in Islam. The Divine Writ declares :

“Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the messenger of Allah and the seal of the Prophets, and Allah is Aware of all things.” (32 : 40)

The Qur’ān has left no doubt; it has proclaimed in a plain language that the religion of God has reached the stage where it can meet all the demands of human life to the end of time.

“This day have I completed your religion for you, and have chosen for you as religion AL-ISLAM.” (5 : 3)

This verse was revealed on the day of ‘Arafah in 10 A. H. when the holy Prophet had gone to perform the Farewell Pilgrimage. Certain intelligent and learned rabbis having an insight into the history of religions had no difficulty in realizing that it was a divine blessing and the greatest gift to the Muslims community; they knew that it was a privilege not enjoyed by earlier religions. One of them said to Caliph ‘Umar : “You have a verse in your holy Book, which, if it had been revealed to us we would have celebrated the day of its revelation as a festival.”¹

Termination of prophethood after the holy Prophet was an indication of the completion of divine favour on man. It meant that humanity had now come to the age of maturity,

1. Caliph ‘Umar replied, “Yes, I know which is that verse, when it was revealed and where the Prophet was on that occasion. It was the day of Arafāt.” (*Bukhārī, Kitāb-ul-Tafsīr*). Caliph ‘Umar meant that the day being itself a festival, he required no new festival to be instituted for it, nor was it necessary in Islam, like other religions, to commemorate memorable happenings in the form of a festival.

crossed the period of adolescence in which it had been languishing for centuries. It taught man to rely on his own knowledge and experience and go ahead to forge unity of human race, unfold the secrets of nature and lay the foundations of a universal culture. It promised man the possibility of overcoming all the divisive forces like local and national patriotisms and physical and geographical hindrances by entering into a new era with the concepts of universal brotherhood of man and ushering a commonwealth of mankind based on cooperative endeavour and universal norms of morality for creating a new and better world to live in.

The times past bear witness to the chaos and tumult which the followers of revealed religions have had to face. These religions had run into intellectual confusion and anarchy of creeds because of their claim to theosophical link with the Unknown through gnostic imagery, beatific vision and illumination of heart. This had led to the division of these communities into orthodox and heterodox sects on the basis of individual spiritual perceptions. Among the older religions Judaism and Christianity had oftener to face this problem which had diverted their energies to combat this menace instead of applying themselves to the good of humanity at large. The confusion and chaos produced by appearance of false prophets had, in fact, sapped the energy of these religions.¹

The belief in the finality of prophethood rendered a great service to man by saving him from the futile effect of looking forward, every now and then, to the promised Messiah to come and finish the job left incomplete by his predecessor. And, at the appearance of every such contender, man had to turn his attention from every thing else to find out the truth or otherwise of the new claimant. The human energy was thus conserved by finality of prophethood for being applied to

1. See the article of Edwin Knox Mithell in the *Encyclopedia of Religions and Ethics*, Volume VIII, Page 588.

the affairs of this world for solving his earthly problems and for unravelling the secrets of nature. The protection thus afforded against ever-recurring intellectual confusion ensured unity of human race.

It was because of this creed of the finality of prophethood that the Muslim community was enabled to successfully combat all the disintegrative forces and conspiracies and to maintain the uniformity of its creed along a single spiritual centre; to give itself a universal cultural and intellectual base and a homogeneity to its identity, which will help to unify the *ummah* at anytime in future. It imparted a strong sense of cohesion and the urge to fight the divisive forces, to command the good and forbid the wrong and, above all, to organise missionary activities for spreading its message. Now the community neither requires a new prophet nor else an *Imām* to complete the task left unfinished by the prophets¹. Islamic renaissance does not stand in need of any surreptitious personality or activity or an alleged superior wisdom, beyond the understanding of common man, which can easily be exploited by any pretender for his ulterior motives.

8. It is also a characteristic of this religion that it has maintained its original teachings unchanged and in their original shape. Its Scripture is safe and has been studied and understood correctly in every age. The followers of this religion have thus been protected against falling a prey to any conspiracy or waywardness as had been the case with several religions, communities, particularly the Christians, who deviated from the teachings of its founders in the earliest phase of their history. It is one of the miracles of the Qur'ān that the *sūrah Fātiha* containing the most oft-repeated verses of the divine Scripture, alludes to the Christians as 'those who go astray' in contradistinction to the Jews who are described as 'those who earn Thine anger'. The secret of this distinction can be fully appreciated by a close study of the history of

1. As a sect of Shias still believes.

Christianity which deviated from the teachings of Jesus Christ in the very beginning of its career and adopted a creed entirely different from that preached by Jesus Christ. I need cite here only one Christian scholar Ernest De Bunsen, who writes in the *Islam or True Christianity* :

"The doctrinal system recorded in the New Testament is not that which Jesus Christ has solemnly preached by word or deed. Not in Jesus, but in Paul, the Jewish and Christian dissenter, with his hidden wisdom, with his figurative interpretation of the Scripture as being full of types and prophecies of future things, lies the principal reason for the existing dissension between Christians on the one side, and Jews and Mahomedans on the other. Following Stephen, the promulgator and developer of Essenic doctrines, Paul has brought the author of Christianity in connection with the Buddhist tradition. Paul has laid the foundation to the amalgamation of antagonistic traditions which can be traced in the New Testament Scriptures, and which has presented the world an essentially non-historical image of Christ. Not Jesus, but Paul, and the later gnostics, have framed the principal doctrines which during eighteen centuries have been recognised as the foundation of orthodox Christianity."¹

In the *sūrah al-Hijr* God says about the Qur'ān :

"Lo ! We, even We, reveal the Reminder, and lo ! We verily are its Guardian." (15:9).

This verse speaks of a great divine favour. Besides protection of its text not only verbally and literally against all accretions and mutilations it also promises its correct understanding for guidance of those who would follow it. It would virtually be meaningless to keep the text of a scripture pure and unadulterated if it were to become unintelligible and

1. Ernest De Bunsen, *Islam or True Christianity*, London, 1889. p. 128.

its teachings impracticable. How significant are the words, "We verily are its Guardians," which can be understood from the explicit promise made by God in this regard in a few more verses which read :—

Lo ! upon Us (resteth) the putting together thereof and reading thereof.

And when We read it : follow thou the reading ;

Then lo ! upon us (resteth) the explanation thereof.
(75 : 17-19).

A religion cannot be relied upon if it has remained practicable only during short periods separated by the darkness of long stretches of time. Nor the Quranic allegory likening Islam to a tree 'yielding fruits at all moments by the will of God',¹ can be deemed as correct if this had been the state of affairs. The followers of this religion are not merely the recipients of this Divine Scripture, but are also charged with the responsibility of studying and acting upon it, exemplifying its teachings in their lives and morals and disseminating its message to the four corners of the world. And this responsibility devolves more on those who can understand and speak the language of the Scripture.

9. Lastly, Islam requires an atmosphere congenial to its genius, or, if I can say so, an agreeable climate and a harmonious surrounding. It is a living religion, a way of life and not an intellectual concept or philosophical thought to be kept in memory or written in a book. It is a creed, a practice, a moral principle, a character, a stream of consciousness and societal attitude — all blended in a system designed to re-create man with a new life-pattern. This is why God also calls Islam as the *sibghatu'llah* which means a distinctive divine colour, trait and characteristic. Islam is much more sensitive than any other religion, having well-defined lineaments which cannot be overstepped by any Muslim. That is why 'apostasy' has a connotation in Islam which is peculiar

to it, and not found in any other religion.

The congenial atmosphere providing proper nourishment to all the facets of Muslim's life, his creed, worship, morals, behaviour, emotions and religious precepts get nourishment from the holy Prophet's noble life, his sayings, instructions and practical examples. Islam is after all a way of life, living and growing like a plant, and therefore it cannot be kept alive without leaning on the feelings and emotions and precedents of the holy Prophet. All these are to be found in the compilations of *ahādith* which provide a precedent for the most virtuous life one can hope to lead. God has also protected, like the *Qur'ān*, the biographical details of the holy personage who had brought that Scripture. The continuity in following the Prophet's example has been a source of inspiration to the doctors of religion who have had no difficulty in making a distinction between the *m'arūf* (right conduct) and *munkar* (disapproved), Islam and the *jāhiliyah* (ignorance) and the *sunnah* (the prophet's example) and the *bid'ah* (innovation) at any time. With this criterion for measuring the conformity and deviation of the Muslim societies of their times from the right path, the savants of religion have ever continued to undertake the task of religious appraisal of the community's life and restated the rational and moral imperatives of Islam throughout the ages past. The compilations of *ahādith*, in which the *Sihah Sittah*¹ have occupied the most prominent place, have always been studied and taught by scholars as the source to which they have returned again and again for refreshing the spiritual vision of the Muslim society. It was with the help of the *hadith* that the revivalists and reformers have interdicted innovations, called the people back to adopt the *sunnah*, and fought the evil of paganish usages to the last ditch. History bears a witness that all the movements of reform and

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1. Comprising *Sahih Bkhārī*, *Sahih Muslim*, *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, *Jame Tirmizi*, *Ibn Mājah* and *Nassāi*. Another work of the same category is *Muwatta* of Imām Mālik.

regeneration of the Muslim society have been directly related to the study of *hadīth* literature and the zeal to propagate its teachings. The reformatory efforts have always suffered a setback when Muslim scholars have neglected the study of *hadīth* in favour of other branches of learning; it was always a time when the Muslim society had absorbed extraneous influences and adopted unvirtuous innovations, came closer to pagan societies and taken up polytheistic customs and usages. Often-times, in such instances, it had laid itself open to losing its own distinctive mark and becoming the part of an alien, pagan society.¹

These are the distinctive characteristics and lineaments of the true faith which give it a personality of its own and distinguish it from all other religions and philosophies of life. A Muslim should not only be aware of these but should also possess the zeal to keep an eye upon them. The intermixing of the truth with falsehood, which is at times more dangerous than a headlong confrontation of the two, has to be avoided, at all costs for keeping the faith pure and unadulterated. This is the only way to find the right path and to save and protect our faith. *Allah guides whom He will on the right path.*

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1. The matter has been discussed by the author in detail in another brochure entitled, *“Role of Ahādith in the formation of Islamic Climate and Attitudes*, published by the Academy of Islamic Research and Publications.

III

THE CREED OF AHL SUNNAT WAL JAMA'AT

Correct and Dependable Sources

The knowledge about the Divine Being and His attributes is the most important and the highest form of cognition that man has received through the prophets of God. For man does not possess even the primary perceptions in regard to mute realities, the prophets of God constitute the only source of acquiring knowledge about God. Reasoning cannot help man in this field since no resemblance of divine form or function is available to help him in his analogical deduction. Far from anything having any resemblance with God, Who is Unique, the Absolute, the Incomparable, too sublime for the faculties possessed by man, there remains nothing for his understanding or even imagination for deducing the unknown from all ideas of time and space, of motion and matter, of sensations and reflections of the material world. Human intelligence is of no help here : He cannot be imagined, not even metaphorically, since He is above the limitation of metaphor also.

Yet, this is the knowledge most essential and surpassing : on it depends the well-being of man and his salvation. It is not only the fountain of creed and morals and civilization,

but also helps man to understand himself and the cosmos around him, to fathom the secrets of life, to determine his own place in the universe, to pattern his behaviour with his fellow beings and to define the goal and end of his life.

All the races and nations have given it the highest importance in every time and clime. All those who have been sagacious and far-sighted among the people have given the most profound thought to this issue. Ignorance in this regard, whether it was conscious or unconscious, has always been regarded as the greatest deficiency or deprivation causing man's destruction.

The people have generally been divided into two classes in the past on this question.

1. First in that class which has placed reliance on the prophets sent by God as His apostles and messengers and gained the knowledge of His Being and attributes from them. God has made such people aware of His likes and dislikes through the prophets who have acted as intermediaries between Him and the mankind. They have been given certitude and light of faith on which complete and unhesitating confidence can be reposed.

“Thus did We show Abraham the kingdom of heavens and the earth that he might be of those possessing certainty” (6 : 76)

The certitude of knowledge with which the prophets are blessed is so convincing, so self-assuring that when one of them (Abraham) is confuted by his people, he gives the reply, “Dispute ye with me concerning Allah when He hath guided me ?” (6 : 81).

The class which has placed trust in the prophets of God has given thought to the universe and its phenomena in the light of knowledge brought by the prophets and successfully accomplished the task of finding the path of virtue, self-purification and moral rectitude. It has never repudiated the use of human intelligence and reasoning ; rather employed these in right channels and reaped the benefits that could be

obtained from them. They have found that the teachings of a prophet of God and their own reason are completely compatible ; one helps the findings of the other. The course adopted by them has caused to increase their faith and certitude :

“It did but confirm them in their faith and resignation.”
(33 : 22).

2. There is another group which has placed complete reliance on its own intelligence and reason. Those subscribing to this view have given free reins to their own imagination and conjured up such minute details of the essence and attributes of the Divine Being as if they were undertaking chemical analysis of a material substance in a laboratory; They started deciding what He is and what He is not or whether the latter quality exceeded the former. The fact is that for one lacking certitude it becomes easier to deny the existence of God than to affirm it. This is the reason why the Greek philosophers of antiquity very often reached the conclusion leading to denial of the existence of God, although no religion or civilization nor yet a view of life and the world can be built simply on abnegation. It is only the prophets of God who have the means and the knowledge to affirm what is beyond the ken of human perception.¹

The Greek philosophical view of God is a jumble of contradictory thoughts and fantasies or a blind alley which leads man to no definite conclusion. In the forefront of this thought were the Greek philosophers of antiquity who were known for their intelligence and wisdom, philosophical

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1. It is noteworthy that there is a lot of difference between what is beyond intellect and what is against human reason. It is also not necessary that anything beyond human intellect should also be against it. Something being beyond intellect only means that human understanding alone is not able to discern its existence or to know it through its own effort. Mujaddid Alf Thānī has expressed this principle trenchantly by saying : “Contradiction is something quite different from inaccessibility since denial can be possible only after having an approach to the thing.” (*Muktūbāt*, Vol.-II, p. 23)

thought and literature but they possessed no insight into things metaphysical with the result that all their efforts in this field were no more than holding a farthing candle to the sun. In one of its grand and powerful verses the Qur'ān depicts the utter darkness of doubt and ignorance of these philosophers.

“Or as darkness on a vast, abysmal sea There covereth him a wave, above which is a wave, above which is a cloud. Layer upon layer of darkness. When he holdeth out his hand he scarce can see it. And he for whom Allah hath not appointed light, for him there is no light.” (24 : 40)

These philosophers had neither the light of guidance nor anything or their own perceptions to lead them on, with the help of their reasoning faculty, to the truth of Reality.¹

Born and brought up in a land whose culture and traditions, literature, arts, religion and philosophy were all inextricably intertwined with polytheism and idolatry, the speculative concepts of these philosophers about intellections as well as cosmology were formulated in the light of their inherited polytheistic thought. Their speculative theology was thus an amalgam of philosophy and Greek mythology although it was clothed with an impressive philosophical jargon.

The later philosophers, excepting those of India who had formulated their own Vedantic philosophy in the light of their own mythology, followed the Greek masters. Impressed by the dexterity of Greek philosophers in numerology, mathematics and certain physical sciences, they took the Greeks as masters of theological thought also. As pointed out by Imām

1. In order to pass a judgement about anything human intellect requires rudimentary experiences gained through the senses which help it to go from the known to that which is not known to it. For a detailed discussion see the author's *“Religion and Civilization”*. For limitation of intellect and the mistakes committed by Greek philosophers in conceiving the Being and attributes of God, the author's *Saviours of Islamic Spirit*, Vol. III, should be seen.

Ghazzālī in the *Tahāfut al Filasāfah* and Ibn Khaldūn in the *Muqaddimah*, it has been an abiding weakness of man that once he accepts the superiority of another in any one field, he is apt to follow his thoughts in all other spheres and uncritically accept his ideas as irrefutable truth. He becomes dogmatic about them and does not allow any one to question their validity.

It is not strange to find this attitude among those who had been unblest with divine guidance or lost it in the distant past. This, however, becomes inexplicable in the case of those Muslim intellectuals who had had the light of prophetic guidance and were bestowed the light of divine revelation whose chief characteristic, according to the holy Qur'ān, is that "falsehood cannot come at it, from before it or behind it ; it is a revelation from the Wise, the Owner of Praise."¹

In the intellectual and educational circles of the Muslims during medieval ages, especially those following the Iranian school, some took up the Greek thought for further elucidation and discussion as if it were an undeniable truth although it consisted of mere suppositions and ratiocinations. Some of them tried to explain away the Quranic verses in the light of Greek philosophy or interpreted them in a way to make them consistent with the Greek speculative theology. The reason for making this mistake was that some of them considered it necessary to get the Necessary Being quit of everything contingent although whatever they had conceived as contingent was itself no more than their own supposition. The result was that they avoided affirmation of several attributes, names and divine functions since these involved, in their opinion, contingency and corporeality which were considered as defects for the Absolute Being. All this specious reasoning was the result of their conceiving God as a human being or forming a mental image of the Divine Being according to their own limited intellect. They were unable to conceive that

1. Q. 41 : 42.

certain attributes could exist without their finite qualities. They forgot that the Divine Attributes could not be limited or circumscribed by the attending characteristics conceived by them. Their line of thought led some of them even to deny all the Divine Attributes, while others interpreted them in a way which, nevertheless, led to their denial and thus they overlooked the wisdom of enduing God with those attributes.

With varying predilections and likings, natural to different scholars, these philosophical reasonings were utilized to formulate a scholastic theology. Yet, the Muslims required theologians whose thoughts were based on the *kitab* and the *sunnah* and the practice of the right-thinking scholars of old, who could ponder over the philosophical and logical subtleties with an open mind, analyse them fearlessly and accept only those parts of the Greek philosophy which were found correct on *a priori* reasoning. They required such master-spirits who would not exalt Aristotle and other Greek masters to the position of God nor consider them impeccable like the prophets. These scholars had to be well-versed in philosophical disciplines, competent to analyse and reject the fallacious findings of Greek philosophers and to propound new principles and ideas which could take the place of erraneous philosophical notions. They had to have an implicit faith in the Qur'ān as the word of God and full credence in the Divine Attributes as spoken of by God in the Scripture, and also able to argue them on rational grounds instead of taking recourse to philosophical jugglery. They had, in short, to answer the description of virtuous scholars thus spoken of in a *hadith*.

“They protect the faith against the modifications of the over-credulous, distortions of the faithless and misrenderings of the ignorants,”¹

There was never a time when such doctors of religion were not to be found in Islam. One such prominent scholar was Shaikh-ul-Islām Hāfiz Ibn Taimiyah (d. 728/1328) in the

1. Related by Baihaqi.

eighth century of the Islamic era. His own writings as well as those of later scholars avouch that he possessed an unshakable faith in everything contained in the Book of God and teachings of the Prophet, reposed full confidence in the virtuous scholars of the old, was fully conversant with the theological and scholastic issues raised in his time and had studied in depth the various schools of Greek philosophy and logic. He was a fearless critic of the principles and propositions of Greek philosophy which were naively accepted by other scholars like a geometrical calculus. His disciple Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzi (d. 791/1389) was a true successor of the great master whose teachings he continued to propagate faithfully to the end of his life.

Another scholar of comparable scholarship and brilliance was Shāh Walīullah of Delhi (d. 1176/1763), the author of *Hujjat Allah-il-Baligha*, who was a noted exegete of the Qur'ān, expounder of the teachings of earlier scholars, an authority on *hadīth* and a jurist with such a deep insight into the wisdom of *shari'ah* that he could be called a *mujtahid*.¹ Shāh Walīullah had also made a deep study of Greek philosophy and mysticism. He revived the study of *hadīth* in India which was being ignored at the time and bravely defended Ibn Taimiyah and other scholars of *hadīth* in an all-round hostile climate. He also wrote books expounding the wisdom of *shari'ah* which are incomparable in the Islamic literature.²

Shāh Walīullah and the scholars of his way of thinking were more suited to expound Islamic creed and teachings for the simple reason that they took a middle course between what may be called 'literal' and 'inferential' interpretations. His *Al-Aqīdat al-Hasanah* offers a good example of it and combines

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1. Nawāb Siddiq Hasan Khān writes, "Had he been born in the beginning of the Islamic era, he would have been classed among the great mujtahids." For a detailed account about him see Volume VI of *Nuzhatul Khwātir* by Syed 'Abdul Hāī al-Hasanī.
 2. *Hujjatul Allah-il-Baligha*, *Izālat ul-Khifā* and *Al-Fauz al-Kabīr* to name only a few.

both depth of his thought as well as a lucid and easy style. This book explains the Islamic view of *tawhid* (falling under the category of theological scholastics), according to the creed of *ahl-i-Sunnat* which ought to be gone through by every Muslim desiring to be deep-versed in the subject. Shāh Waliullah has drawn and amplified the matter dealt with by him from the works (like *Aqidah al-Tahawi*) of earlier eminent scholars.

The Fundamentals of Islamic Creed.

This universe has a Creator who has been yesterday and today and shall remain forever. His existence is an absolute fact and His Being is eternal. He possesses the perfection of attributes and is free from all defects and limitations. He has knowledge of all things and wields power over every eventuality. The universe is a manifestation of His Will. He is the Living, the Hearing and the Seeing; nothing is like Him nor there is anything His coequal or rival; He is peerless and needs no assistance. As an Absolute Being, worthy of being adored by all, Creator and Preserver of the heavens and the earth, and all that exists therein and inbetween, He has no partner or assistant. Worship is for Him alone. He alone cures the sick and provides sustenance to His creatures. His word of command is all that is needed to bring into existence what is non-existent.

“His affair, when He intendeth a thing, is only that He saith unto it : be, and it becometh.” (36 : 81)

Allah neither unites nor indwells in anything. His is not contingent either in his being or attributes; nor is He essence or substance circumscribed with limits, nor determined by measure or direction. He is above in the heavens on His Throne of Glory and will be seen by the believers on the Day of Judgement. Only that comes to pass which He wills for nothing ever happens against His will. He is independent of everything, lacks nothing, is not subject to any decree, nor He can be questioned about anything. Nothing attributed to Him can make Him liable to any defect or impotence; wisdom

is one of His attributes for He does everything in the most prudent manner. There is no Lord other than Him.

Fate, whether good or evil, proceeds entirely from the Divine will¹. His eternal and ancient knowledge comprehends everything that has passed or will come to pass and that alone makes every eventuality an accomplished fact. He has angels high in dignity who keep close to Him while there are others charged to record the actions of human beings, or to protect them in difficulties and disasters, or to summon them to the path of righteousness. They cause man to attain the good. The devils have also been created by God but they lead man to the evil. Jinn are also creatures of God.

Qur'ān is the word of God, both in its letter and content ; it is complete ; protected against every interpolation, addition or deletion ; and whoever believes that any part of it has been changed or lost is not a Muslim.

It is not permitted to misinterpret Divine names and attributes or to ascribe anything to God unbecoming of His exalted majesty. Whatever *shari'ah* tells us in this regard is to be deemed as authoritative and final.

Bodily punishment in the Hereafter as well as accountability of one's actions and the reward and punishment therefor are all gospel truths. *Sirāt*, the bridge across the infernal fire, is a fact spoken of in the Qur'ān and the *ahādīth*. Similarly, the paradise and hell are all real and sure-enough already created.

Muslims who have committed major sins shall not remain in the hell for ever. Intercession will only be with the permission of God. The holy Prophet will intercede for such of his followers who have committed major sins and his intercession shall be accepted by God. There is no doubt about the chastisement of unbelievers and the comfortable existence

1. The Prophet is related to have said, 'Nobody can be a believer unless he gives faith to fate, whether good or bad, and also knows that he cannot escape whatever has reached him and whatever has escaped him will never reach him.' (Tirmidhi)

of believers in their graves. Similarly veritable is the interrogation of every man after his death by the angels.

Prophets are sent by God to mankind who inform them of the divine commandments, the permissible and the impermissible, which are incumbent for all. The prophets of God are endowed with certain faculties not granted to others, and these constitute the evidence of their prophethood. These include their inherent pre-disposition to take the right path, exemplary character and the power to work miracles. The prophets are protected against committing major sins.

Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) was the last Prophet of God. No prophet will be sent after him. The message brought by him is for the whole world, mankind and the jinni. In this respect the prophethood of the last Prophet excels that of all the earlier ones and hence nobody can be a believer unless one gives faith to him. Islam is, therefore, the only religion acceptable to God: no other religion can lead man to the eternal salvation in the hereafter.¹

Ascension was a fact. God made the holy Prophet, while he was wide awake, to go from the sacred mosque in Mecca to the Bait-ul-Muqqadas and thence to the place where He wanted to him to visit.

Miraculous powers² are granted to the saintly persons (those who are endowed the cognition of God and attain the inward perfection in spirituality), but this distinction is allowed only to those whom God wills. But nobody is absolved from the obligation of *shari'ah*. Whatever may be one's attainment in the perfection of spirit, one shall always be liable to abide by the obligatory commandments. One should desist from the

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1. This contradicts the unity of all religions which means that all religions lead to God. This represents the ancient Indian thought which is being popularised today.
 2. These differ from the *m'ujizāt* of the prophets and are known as *karāmāt*. There is no word in English to differentiate between the two.

sins and the things declared impermissible so long as one remains sane and is possessed of reason. Prophethood is absolutely superior to sainthood and no saint, howsoever perfect in spiritual attainment, can be equal in dignity even to an ordinary companion of the Prophet. The propinquity of the companions to divine presence is because of their greater merit in the sight of God and not due to abundance of their thanksgiving.¹

The best of creations after the prophets, elects among the believers, were the companions of the last Prophet and the ten who were promised paradise will certainly attain it. We hold the members of the Prophet's household and his wives in esteem, love them and acknowledge their sublimity. We also testify the great merit of those who fought in the battle of Badr and those who took the oath of fealty to the Prophet under the acacia tree at Hudaibiyah. As *ahl-i-sunnat* we believe in the candour and rectitude of the companions. As the same time, we do not hold them to be impeccable but instead of finding fault with them for their mutual differences, we pass over at them.

Abū Bakr was the duly elected leader of the Muslims and deputy of the Prophet after the demise of the latter. Thereafter, 'Umar, 'Uthmān and 'Alī Cbecame aliphs and with them the right-guided Caliphate came to an end. Abū Bakr and 'Umar were, in order of merit, the most revered among the followers of the Prophet. We have only good words² for all the companions of the Prophet who were our path-finders; we consider it a sin to find fault with them.

1. The Prophet is related to have said : "Do not speak ill of my companions. If any one among you spends as much gold as mount Uhad, it shall not be taken as equal to a *mud* (roughly, a kilogram) or even half of a *mud*, spent by them."
2. Shāh Waliullah explains it thus ; "We do not entertain the belief of superiority of race, courage and valour, bodily strength or knowledge of the first three Caliphs but place reliance in their superiority in rendering the greatest service to Islam."

We do not hold as disbeliever anybody among the *ahl-i-qibla*,¹ but whoever denies that God is the Creator and absolute Ruler of the universe, pays divine honours to something other than God, rejects hereafter, does not accept any prophet or disclaims the essentials of religious creed² is a disbeliever. The concepts like holding any sin to be admissible or making fun of the *shari'ah* or its commandments amount to disbelief. It is necessary to enjoin the right and forbid the wrong (provided it has no disastrous consequences) and to seek mutual understanding among the believers.³ We believe in all the prophets of God and the books vouchsafed to them. We make no distinction between the prophets of God.

Faith is what lies in the heart and is affirmed by the tongue. Human actions emanate from the will of God and endeavour of man. We put our trust in the signs of the Day of Judgement as described in the *ahādith*. Unity among the Muslims is regarded by us as good and meritorious while disunity and discord are surely taken by us as wrong and a means to invite divine wrath.

Tauhid, True Faith and Shirk

Worshipful devotion depends on the effort to set right the creed and the faith. If the creed of anybody is unsound and

1. Theologists have defined *ahl-i-qibla* as those who give faith to the creed accepted by consensus and proved by the Qur'ān and the *sunnaḥ*. Anybody denying the ultimate destruction of the world, perfect knowledge of God or the obligatory nature of prayer and fasting will not be reckoned as belonging to *ahl-i-qibla*, even if he undergoes penance and travails. Similarly, one prostrating before the idols, making fun of any command of the *shari'ah* or things like that shall not be regarded as one of *ahl-i-qibla*.
2. Essentials of religious creed comprise doctrines and commands affirmed as fundamentals of religion in the Qur'ān, undoubted *ahādith* and consensus of the companions. If they belong to the realm of creed, one is bound to give faith to them and act on them if they relate to the commandments.
3. Summarised from *Al-'Aqīdat al-Ḥasanah* by Shāh Waliullah

the faith is not absolute, neither his worship will be acceptable nor his actions will be deemed as correct. But even inconsiderable actions will be sufficient if the creed is correct and the faith is absolute. One should, therefore, endeavour that one's creed and faith are accurate and pure. Rather, one should consider these as one's sole objective, something of a dire necessity in which no indulgence can be allowed.¹

Anyone who has studied the Qur'ān without any preconceptions and with the purpose of finding the truth would know that the pagans of the Prophet's time did not equate their deities with God. They acknowledged that the numerous deities revered by them were as much creations of God as anything else ; they never claimed that the lesser deities enjoyed the same power as God or that they were consubstantial with God. Their disbelief and infidelity consisted of the fact that they prayed to their fetish deities, entreated to them, made oblations and sacrifices to them and took them as intercessors with God. If anyone feels that way towards anything, he will not be a bit different from the idolaters of the pagan past even if he bears witness to his being a creature and a slave of God.

Shāh Walīullah writes in the *Hujjat Allah-il-Baligha* :

It ought to be known that the belief in *tauḥīd* can be divided into four grades .—

1. To take only God as the Necessary Being for there is no other necessary being save Him.²
2. To consider God alone as the Creator of empyrean, sky, earth and everything having an existence. It consists of two grades but the revealed scriptures have not deemed it necessary to discuss them, nor pagans of Arabia or the Jews and Christians held a

1. See Mohd. Ismā'il Shaheed's, *Taqwīyatul Imān*,

2. This is known as *tauḥīd ur-rabūbiyah*,

contrary view.¹ The Qur'ān is explicit that both these grades were plain truths even to them.

3. To hold the view that the management of the heavens and the earth, and all that is in-between, rests with Allah.
4. The fourth stage is to hold that none except God deserves to be worshipped². Both these latter stages hold together and synchronize with each other. The Qur'ān has discussed them in detail and allayed the doubts of disbelievers in the most satisfying manner.³

This shows that it is *shirk*⁴ to hold anyone on terms of equality with God. It rather means to adopt the attitude or conduct oneself towards anyone in a way that God has made exclusive for His Exalted Being. It covers all the different forms of divine service, such as, prostration before any created being, making sacrifices for someone, entreating anyone to do something, asking for help in difficulties, taking anyone as omnipresent, considering anyone to have a hand in the governance of the universe etc. All these involve *shirk* and make a man polytheist. Even if such a person believes that the human being, jinni or the angel before whom he is prostrating, or offering sacrifice, or asking for help occupies a position inferior to God and is His creature, he shall be deemed as a polytheist. The prophets, saints, jinn, devils or evil spirits to whom such an attitude is adopted make no difference. This is the reason why the Jews and Christians who exaggerated the position of their rabbis, clergymen and monks were all denounced by God as polytheists for ascribing divine powers to them.

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1. Says God : And if thou ask them : who created the heavens and the earth, they will surely answer : The Mighty, the Knower created them. (49 : 9)
 2. It is known as *tauhid-ul-ulāhiyat*.
 3. Summarized from *Hujjat Allāh il Bāligha*, Volume I, pp 59-60.
 4. *Shirk* signifies belief in anyone sharing the powers and prerogatives of God in any manner.

The Qur'ān says :

“They have taken their priests and their monks for their Lords, besides Allah, and also the Masih, son of Maryam, whereas they were enjoined that they should worship but one God ; no God is there but He. Hallowed be He from that which they associate.”

(9 : 31)

Polytheistic Behaviour and Superstitious Usages

This fundamental principle needs to be explained with reference to common aberrations that are found in the people owing to ignorance, extraneous influences and adoption of pagan customs from their neighbours. Such people normally lack Islamic grooming, edification in correct Islamic teachings in the light of Qur'ān and the *sunnah* and an Islamic atmosphere. These weaknesses have been explained here for doing away with them.

Comprehensive knowledge, determinate and definite will and decree, unfettered power to do what He will and perfection of accomplishment are some of the attributes of Almighty God. Divine service, such as, prostration or genuflection before anyone, keeping of fast for his propitiation, undertaking a journey with the same devotional attitude as befits the *hajj*, taking of sacrificial animals to a shrine and vows and oblations in the name of anyone bespeak of the *shirk* of a person performing these acts. All the divine services expressing devotion and glorification of God are exclusive for Him. Knowledge of the unknown is with God for it is beyond the power of a human being to know always the conceptions of the mind and motions of thought or else what is kept secret in the hearts. God should not be conceived like a worldly king in the matter of governance of the universe, bestowing favours or accepting the intercession of those deemed nearer to Him. One ought to beseech God alone for everything, great or small. It does not befit God to be assisted by anybody in the governance of the universe like the kings and rulers who

cannot do without the help of ministers and courtiers. Prostration before anyone save God is disallowed. The sacred rites and ceremonies attending the pilgrimage are expressive of love and devotion to the House of God and are therefore exclusive for it. To assign particular sacrificial animals to the saints, holding them in awe, vows and oblations in order to gain their favour are all prohibited acts. Adoration and glorification is for God alone as is sacrifice for His magnification. Putting one's faith in the soothsayers, astrologers and fortune-tellers or in the influence of constellations indicates disbelief in a person and is therefore prohibited.

In giving names to their children the Muslims should express their attachment to *tauḥīd* or oneness of God. They ought to desist from giving such names which can create a misunderstanding or are expressive of polytheism. It is prohibited to take an oath in the name of anyone except God. It is also prohibited to offer sacrifice at any place where there was an idol or a festival was held by the pagans. One should exercise moderation in the adulation of the holy Prophet and should not magnify him as the Jews and Christians did in the case of their prophets. Similarly, homage should not be paid to pictures and representations of saints.

The End and Purpose of Prophethood

Belief in the overlordship of God, correct relationship between the Creator and the created and an invitation to pay homage to him alone has always been, in every time and clime, the first and foremost object of the prophets of God. They have always taught that God alone has the power to do any harm or good and therefore He alone deserves the prayers, supplications and oblations. In every age they have taken the offensive against polytheistic cults surviving in the shape of idol worship or veneration of living or dead godly persons. The people believed, during the ages of pagan past, that since God has bestowed His favours and honours on certain lesser deities, He has also given them power to intervene in some of

the matters divine and to intercede on their behalf. They thought that just as a ruler is appointed for every land by an emperor who enjoys the royal prerogatives in that area, these saintly persons have to be propitiated as guardian spirits for the benefit of the people of that region.

Anyone who has studied the Qur'ān, which is a resume of all the previous scriptures, would know for certainty that one of the basic aims of prophethood has been to fight against polytheism and save the people from its corrupting influence. This has been the central point of the message of the prophets of God, the fundamental aim of all their endeavours. Sometimes the Qur'ān referring to them says: "And We sent no messenger before thee but We inspired him: There is no God save Me, so worship Me".¹ At others the Qur'ān names the prophets of old individually and tells us that each one of them started his mission by inviting the people to the adoration of One God.² The first thing they said to their people was: "O my people! Serve Allah. You have no other God save Him."³

Taking others for God, prostrating before them, demeaning oneself before them, seeking their help, offering oblations and sacrifices to them are in reality different forms of idolatry and polytheism. They also denote the paganish "Ignorance", a universal trait which has always been present with the people like a malignant growth. Verily, it is the most morbid ailment of human race which has survived all vicissitudes of history as well as cultural, economic and social transformations. It invites the wrath of God and acts as an stumbling block in the spiritual, moral and cultural progress of mankind. It debases mankind and lowers its prestige, and that is why the fight with it shall remain the focal point of all truly religious and reformatory calls to the end of time. The Qur'ān recalls

1. 21 : 25

2. e. g., *Surah 'Arāf* specifically mentions, Nūh, Hūd, Sālih and Shua'ib who started their ministry with a call to *Tauhid*.

3. 7 : 59

about Abraham : "And he made it a word enduring among his seed, that haply they may return."¹ This has been the way of all the reformers and the righteous savants inviting the people to God.

Shirk, Never Unimportant

It is never advisable to minimize the gravity of *shirk* or polytheism for the reason that since the new age requires new patterns of reformatory endeavour, it has to be allotted a subordinate position in the call to reformation. It is also not correct to equate the obedience to God with the submission to political authority or the man-made laws and systems, or even to treat the two as equally offensive. It is erraneous to think, both on grounds of day-to-day experiences and actual happenings, that the *shirk* was a perversity of the pagan past (when human intellect, knowledge and culture were in their stages of infancy) but, now, when man has gone sufficiently ahead on the road to progress, this intellectual aberration manifests itself in new-shapes consistent with the modern cultural ethos. Polytheism and idolatry exist even today and in several countries and nations; even among the Muslims it can be seen as a stark reality. The Quranic dictum is true to this day : "And most of them believe not in Allah except that they attribute partners (unto Him)²."

The indifference to *shirk* shows not only a disregard and contempt to the mission and strivings of the prophets and bespeaks of doubt in the eternal character of the Qur'ān but also amounts to rejection of the prophetic way as the best and accepted mode of endeavour in the way of God. The way of the prophets had the approval of God for it were assured the succour and success which cannot be had through any other method of reformatory endeavour.

1. 43 : 28

2. 12 : 106

Bid'at and its Harm u l Effects

To include anything in religion not made so by God or the Prophet, or to do it with the hope of attaining merit or propinquity to God, or to follow it with the same meticulous care as a religious observance is acted upon, amounts to *bid'at*. It really means grafting of a man-made system to the divine order of laws or creation of a state within state. *Bid'at* has its own legalism with obligatory, commendable and voluntary observances which run parallel to the divine legislation and sometimes even exceed them in number and importance. *Bid'at* overlooks the fact that the *shari'ah* given by God is complete and that no addition or alteration can now be made in it. Imām Mālik was correct in his remark when he said : "Whoever introduces a *Bid'at* in Islam and also considers it a salutary act, in fact announces that the Prophet was (God forbid) not faithful in preaching his message, for God says : *I have this day completed your religion*. Thus, whatever was not religion in the Prophet's life-time cannot be deemed as religion today".¹

One of the characteristics of God-sent *shari'ah* is its aptness and practicality in all times. The Law-giver is also the Creator of man who is well-aware of the needs and nature, strength and weaknesses of man. The Qur'ān expresses the same idea in these words.

"Should He not know what He created ? And He is the Subtle, the Aware."²

The divine Law makes an allowance for every contingency but when man takes up the task of framing laws for himself, he cannot take everything into consideration. Admixture of innovations and additions made from time to time make the religion so cumbersome and difficult that the people tend to get rid of the religion itself. "He hath chosen you and hath

1. Related from Ibn al-Mā'jishūn by Imām Mālik.

2. 67 : 14

not laid upon you in religion any hardship,"¹ is a declaration of divine blessing, but it is taken away where innovations prevail. Its examples can be seen in elaborate orisons and rites where the *bid'at* or innovations come to have a free hand.

Another feature of God-given religion and its law is its universal applicability for it remains the same in every age and place. Any Muslim from one region may go to another part of the world, but he would not face any difficulty in the observance of religious obligations, nor he would require the help of any local mentor or guidebook. The *bid'at* is, contrarily, never uniform. It is a product of local conditions, historical causes or personal prejudices and interests. It can, therefore, assume the shape of a different religion in every country or rather every region and town or may differ from house to house.

It was because of these considerations, perennial and universal in nature, that the holy Prophet had instructed his followers to follow his *sunnah* and avoid *bid'at* scrupulously. He had given the direction that :—

“Whoever introduces something new in our religion that was not its part earlier, it shall be deemed as null and void.”²

“Avoid innovation in religion, for every innovation is a wickedness and every wickedness has its abode in the hell.”³

The Prophet also predicted that

“Whenever people introduce some innovation in religion, an equivalent portion of *sunnah* is taken away (from them).”⁴

All-out Campaign against Bid'at

Companions of the Prophet, Imāms and jurists, righteous

1. 22 : 78

2. *Sihāh Sittah*

3. *Mishkāt ul-Masābih*, Abu Dawūd, Ahmad.

4. *Musnad*, Imām Ahmad.

scholars and reformers have all launched hard-hitting campaigns against innovations arising in their times in order to prevent them from becoming popular in the Muslim society, specially in the religious circles. The attraction such innovations have always had among the credulous masses and the way these have served the vested interests of the self-seeking impious groups, have already been alluded to in this verse of the Qur'ān :

“O ye who believe ! Lo ! many of the (Jewish) rabbis and the (Christian) monks devour the wealth of mankind wantonly and debar (men) from the way of Allah”¹

All those who have fought the innovations had to undergo severe hardships but unmindful of their personal plights they have continued their struggle with the zeal of crusaders and guardians of religion. They were accused by the credulous masses and impious religious groups as reactionaries, dogmatics and bigoted fanatics,² but they have remained unconcerned with the campaigns of vilification and persecution. Their forceful harangues and writings to demonstrate the truth and to expose the aberrations were so successful that several of these innovations were completely rooted out and today we know about them only from the books describing society and culture of the times past. The innovations still extant are being fought vigorously by the right-minded scholars.

“Of the believers are men who are true to that which they covenanted with Allah. Some of them have paid their vow by death (in battle), and some of them still are waiting ; and they have not altered in the least.”³

1. 9 : 34

2. Also Wahhābi in certain places like India.

3. 33 : 23

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IV

WORSHIP IN ISLAM

Greatest importance is accorded to worship,¹ next only to creed, in the prophetic religions among which Islam occupies a place at the top. It is because worship is the very end and purpose of the creation of man. God has clearly stated in the Qur'ān.

“I created the jinn and mankind only that they might worship Me.” (51 : 56)

All the religious scriptures have formulated laws about the acts of worship and invited their followers to observe them. Islamic law has likewise presented them but with greater perfection. The Prophet of Islam was so zealous about them that his ardour for worship can hardly be described in words. Scores of Quranic verses and hundreds of *ahadith* exist which

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1. The concept of *din* or religion in Islam is wider than that in any other religion. Every act performed for the pleasure of God with the express intention of winning a reward from God and with faith in Him falls within the purview of religion or *din* even if it fulfills an exclusively personal, secular or fiscal need of the individual. The acts of worship, such as, *salāt*, *zakāt*, and *hajj*, have, however, great importance. Any effort to equate these with other meritorious acts performed merely for winning a merit or reward, amounts to misinterpretation of religion and opens the gates of apostasy.

explain the great merit of worship and invite the believers to perform them with a solemn heart; those who are constant in prayers have been praised and the people indifferent to them have been severely criticized.¹ They contain an appeal to excel others in the performance of worshipful observances.

The Qurān holds that even domination over a country and fighting in the way of God are simply the means for establishing prayer.

“Those who, if We give them power in the land, establish worship and pay the poor-due and enjoin kindness and forbid iniquity. And Allah is the sequel of events.” (22 : 41)

Even a cursory glance at the Qur’ān is sufficient to convince any one that what is required of man is nearness and submission through observance of prescribed acts of worship (that is, prayer, poor-due, fasting and pilgrimage). He will be asked about them on the Day of Judgement and punished for their non-observance. Those who will be sent to hell will be asked :

“What hath brought you to this burning?

They will answer : We were not of those who prayed, nor did we feed the wretched. We used to wade (in vain dispute) with (all) waders, and we used to deny the Day of Judgement till the inevitable came to us.”

(74 : 42-47)

At another place the reason for entry into hell is thus explained :—

“For he neither trusted, nor prayed.

But he denied and flouted.

Then went he to his folk with glee.” (75 : 31-32)

These verses are clear enough to show that the acts of worship have a central place in the scheme of life prescribed by religion and it is they about which one will be particularly

1. See the compilations of *ahādith*, particularly the chapters dealing with the acts of devotion and worship as well as verses 32 : 16 ; 25 : 64 ; 3 : 17 ; 33 : 35, 42 ; 18 : 28 ; 6 : 52 of the Qurān

accountable on the Day of Judgement. The remaining matters like establishment of a theocratic state and endeavour for public weal have a secondary place, or are just the means to achieve this end.

The first and foremost in these prescribed observances is *salāt* or the prayer. It is a pillar of religion and the distinguishing mark between a believer and a non-believer. The believers are thus commanded by God :

“And establish worship, and be not of those who ascribe partners (unto Him).” (30 : 31)

Imām Bukhārī has given in the *Jāmi‘i a hadīth* of the Holy Prophet, on the authority of Jābir, which reports him as saying: “Discontinuance of prayer stands between a man and his infidelity.”

Another *hadīth* recorded in the *Tirmidhī* says :

“The barrier between belief and disbelief is discontinuance of prayer.”

Observance of prayers is a condition precedent¹ for salvation : it is the protector of faith. It is held up by God as the primary condition for granting guidance and piety. It is incumbent on everyone, on the slave and the free, on the rich and the poor, on the sick and the healthy whether they are in the camp or cantonment. No adult is exempt from it under any circumstance—as against fasting, pilgrimage and poor-due which have been made stipulatory, depending on the fulfilment of certain conditions and at certain periods. Prayer, on the other hand, has to be observed even on the battle-field. It is an obligation that even the prophets of God cannot afford to neglect, leave alone the saints and gnostics, for God has clearly ordained :

“And serve thy Lord till the inevitable² cometh unto

1. See verses 1—3 of *Surat-ul-Baqara* and verses 14-15 of *Surat-ul-‘Alā*.

2. There is a consensus of all the commentators and scholars that ‘inevitable’ signifies death. Observance of prayer by every sane adult is a well-known injunction of the *shari‘ah*.

thee.” (15 : 99)

Salat is to the believer what water is to the fish. It is the greatest shelter or haven of peace for the believer.¹ If *salāt* is offered with a perfect heart, it will guard the observer against yielding obedience to deities other than God, going in for unenlightened paganish way of life and sliding down to the immoral behaviour, for all these are wholly antagonistic to the spirit of *salat*.

Salat is not a wooden, dead ritual in which there is no scope for spiritual development or wherein everyone is compelled to stay at the same level. Its scope is very vast, taking the devotee forward from one stage to another until he attains perfection of spirit, and advances to the heights that are beyond the imagination of man. In its vitality and potency to create a living relationship with God and to attain His propinquity nothing in the entire scheme of *shari'ah* can be compared to *salāt*. It has enabled the true and pious believers in every age and of every race to attain such spiritual heights and inner excellence that the rationalists cannot dream of them. Their number is legion. *Salat* is the legacy of prophethood which has been handed down meticulously, with all its forms, regulations and content by one generation to another.

Salāt was the most valued and pleasing form of worship to the Holy Prophet. He always had the greatest satisfaction and peace through prayer. He often used to say : “The coolness of my eyes lies in *salat*.”² The Prophet used to ask Bilāl, whenever the time came for prayers : “O Bilāl, give the call to prayer and bring comfort to my heart.”³ Hudaifa, a companion of the Prophet, relates that whenever the holy Prophet was faced with any difficulty he used to offer prayers

1. For a detailed description see the chapter on *salāt*, in the *Four Pillars of Islam* by the author.

2. *Nassāi*.

3. *Abū Dawūd, Kitāb ul-Adab*.

instantly¹

The *salat* of the Holy Prophet was the most sublime example of what is known as *ihsān*. Once on being enquired about the significance of *ihsān*, the Prophet is reported to have replied : “(It meant) that you worshipped God as if you were seeing Him, and if you were not seeing Him, He, at least, was seeing you :”² This is the prayer required of every believer for he is ordained to follow the example of the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet once directed the Muslims : “Offer prayers as you see me offering.”³ We shall now give here a brief sketch of the prayer as offered by the Prophet.⁴

The way Holy Prophet offered *Salāt*

For *salat* is the adoration of and proximity to God, the Holy Prophet has stressed the need of performing *wadu* or ablution for attaining complete state of physical purity. The Prophet also recommended to brush one's teeth with a *miswāk*,⁵ and once he said, “Had I not been aware of the hardship to my people, I would have ordered them to brush their teeth before every prayer.”⁶

When the Holy Prophet stood up for prayers, he audibly recited, “*Allah-o-Akbar*” that is, the *takbīr tahrīma*, and said nothing before it. He used to raise his hands, while uttering *Allah-o-Akbar*, in a way that his palm faced the *qiblah*, his fingers wide open and then he kept his right hand on the back of left hand's palm. In obligatory prayers he used to recite the invocation :

“Holiness to Thee, O God!
And praise be to Thee!
Blessed is Thy name!

1. *Abu Dawūd*

2. *Sahīhain* :

3. *Bukhārī*

4. Taken from *Zād al-Ma'ād* of Ibn Qayyim.

5. A tooth-cleaner made of crushed twig.

6. *Sahīhain*.

Great is Thy greatness !

And there is no deity but Thee !

Different invocations have been reported for *tahajjud*¹ and *nafl* or voluntary prayers, such as :

“O Allāh ! make me as distant from my wrongs as the east and west are removed by Thee. O Allāh ! wash me of my sins with water and snow and hailstone. O Allāh, cleanse me of my sins as dirt is washed out of a white cloth.”

Thereafter, the Prophet recited, “I betake myself to Allāh for refuge from the accursed Satan”, and “I begin in the name of Allāh, the Merciful, the Compassionate,” and then followed it up with the *Sūratul Fātiha*.² His recital was clear, audible and every word was pronounced distinctly. He paused at the end of every verse, almost intoning the last word. Having finished the *Sūratul Fātiha* he said, “Āmīn”.³ He paused twice for a little longer time; first between the *takbīr* and the *Sūratul Fātiha* and then in between the *Sūratul Fātiha* and the other *sūrah* he recited after it or before genuflection. The *sūrah* recited after *Sūratul Fātiha* was often a longer one but sometimes he selected a shorter one usually during travels or on other similar occasions. Very often he recited the *sūrah* of moderate length which was neither very long nor too short. In the *fajr* prayers he usually recited one of the longer *sūras* known as *tawāl-i-mufasssal*⁴ consisting of 60 to 100 verses. It is related that during the travels he normally recited *Sūrah az-Zilzāl* or the *Ma'ūzatain*. In the *fajr* prayer on Fridays he usually recited *Sūrah Alif Lam Sajdah* and *Sūrah Dahr* and when there was a bigger congregation, such as, on Fridays or 'Ids, he normally

1. Prayer offered in the second part of night.

2. First chapter of the Qur'ān.

3. There is a difference of opinion among the scholars whether *Āmīn* was said audibly or inaudibly. Those interested may refer to compilations of *ḥadīth* and *fiqh*.

4. *Tawāl-i-Mufasssal* are the *sūras* from *Sūrah Hujūrāt* to *Sūrah Burāj*.

recited *Sūrah Qāf*, *Sūratul Qamar*, *Sūratul ‘Āla* and *Sūratul Ghāshia*.

His recital was often longer in the *zuhr* prayer while in the ‘*asr*’ prayer it was normally half of the former. If he recited a shorter *sūrah* during the *zuhr* prayer than the one recited during ‘*asr*’ was almost of equal length to that : in the *maghrib* prayers he is reported to have recited both the longer and shorter *sūrahs* but normally it was one of the *qisār-i-mufasssal*¹. Normally one of the *sūras* of middle length were recited in the ‘*ishā*’ prayers. Once when Ma‘ādh b. Jabal recited *Sūratul Baqarah* in the ‘*ishā*’ prayer he admonished him saying “O Ma‘ādh, would you plunge the people in dissension ?”

In Friday prayers he recited the whole of *Suratul Jumah* and *Surah Munafiqūn* or *Suratul ‘Āla* and *Sūratul Ghāshiya*. Except for Friday and ‘*Id*’ prayers he had no fixed schedule of *sūras* for recital which could not be changed. The first *rak‘at* of *fajr* prayer used to be longer than the second one or normally it was so in every prayer, but in the *fajr* prayer the recital was the longest in comparison to other prayers because the Qur‘ān says : “Verily the recital (of the Qur‘ān) at dawn, Lo ! the recital is witnessed.”²

In the *rukū* (genuflexion) the Prophet bowed down by placing his hands on the knees, as if he was holding them, the hands being straight and kept at a distance from the sides, the back also being kept straight, while he recited, “Glory be to my Lord, the Most Majestic”. Normally he recited these words ten times. Every act in the prayer was performed with grace and ease. While raising his head from the *rukū* he uttered, “Allah hears him who praises Him”³; when he got up making the waist straight, he said, “Our Lord, Thou art Praised”, Sometimes he added a few more words to it. Then with

1. *Qisār-i-Mufasssal* are the *sūrahs* from *Lamyakun* to *Wan-nās*.

2. 17 : 78

3. The question whether hands should be raised to ears before and after the *rukū* is a disputed matter discussed in the treatises of *fiqh*.

another *takbīr*, *Allah-o-Akbar*, he went down into prostration, his knees touching the ground before he placed his hands on it. But, while getting up the hands were raised first and then the knees left the ground. While in prostration the forehead and nose were placed on the ground, the hands were kept apart on the sides so that one could see the pit of the arms, while the palms took the position in line with his shoulders and ears. He performed the prostration with complete repose, the fingers of the foot pointing towards the *qiblah*, and he murmured: "Glory be to my Lord, the Most High", or a few words more, normally repeating the same ten times. In the voluntary prayers he very often supplicated while in prostration. Then he sank backward upon his heels, placed his hand on the thighs, and said, "My Lord, Forgive me, have mercy on me, make me secure, guide me and give me sustenance." Thereafter he stood up, leaning on foot-fingers, knees and thighs, and started the recital without any pause, repeating the second *rak'at* like the first one. When he sat down in *tashahhud*, his left hand was placed on the left thigh and right hand on the right thigh. He raised his first finger of the right hand during the *tashahhud* and asked his companions to recite it in the same way. His recitation in *tashahhud* was :

"Veneration and worship and sanctity—all are for God. Peace be on thee, O Prophet, and his mercy and blessings. And peace be on us and upon God's righteous servants. I witness that there is no deity save Allah and I witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger."

Sometimes the Prophet shortened the *tashahhud* but there is no report to suggest that he ever recited *darūd* before it or beseeched protection against torments of the grave or hell or the perils of earthly life or of Dajjal.

Then he got up again leaning on foot-fingers, knees and thighs, as in the first *rak'at*, and performed the subsequent *rak'ats*. In the last *rak'at* wherein the prayers were terminated,

he sat down to recite the foregoing *tashahhud*.¹

After the *tashahhud* he recited the *darūd*² and then supplicated as follows :—

“O Allah, I seek refuge from the torments of the grave, and from the perils of Dajjāl, and from the vicissitudes of life and death. O Allah, I seek thy refuge from the sins and the burden of loans”.³

The Prophet is reported to have taught this supplication to Abū Bakr :

“O Allah, I have wronged heavily my ownself and none can forgive the sins save Thee ; then, grant me salvation from Thee and have mercy on me. Thou art the Forgiving, the Merciful.”

A few more supplications are reported to have been taught by the Prophet to his companions. He turned the head, after reciting one of these supplications, to the right, saying, “Peace and mercy of God be on you”, and repeated the same turning his head to the left. Thereafter the Prophet kept sitting but turned to the left or right. ‘Abdullah b. ‘Abbās relates that he could know when the Prophet terminated his prayer by utterances of Allah-o-Akbar.⁴ He recited, *istighfār* thrice immediately after terminating the prayer and then glorified the Lord with these words :

“O Allah ! Thou art peace and peace is from Thee ; Thou art Holy, the Possessor of Glory and Honour.”

The Prophet kept sitting facing the *qiblah* only so long as he recited the above prayer. Thereafter he turned towards the

1. Jurisconsults and scholars of *hadīth* differ whether he sat on both the feet or on the left one alone. The question has been discussed in the treatises of *fiqh*.
2. Hākim relates in the *Mustadrak* on the authority of ‘Abdullah b. Mas‘ūd that one should recite the *tashahhud* and *darūd* and then beseech for one's ownself. (*Fath-ul-Bārī, Kitāb-ud-Dawāt, bāb salāt ‘ala'n nabī*). *Sahihain* has a report from the Prophet saying, “Then one should beseech as he likes.”
3. Both Abū Huraira and ‘Abdullah b. ‘Abbās relate that the Prophet taught this supplication to his companions.
4. *Bukhārī, bāb-us-zikr bi'al as-salāt*.

congregation, sometimes to the left or the right, and then recited the following hymn after every obligatory prayer :

“No deity is there save Allah, the One, without any associate. To Him belongs the dominion and all praise. And He is potent over everything. O Allah, there is none to debar (anyone) from what Thou bestows, and none to give what Thou witholds. Nothing of one’s benefit can reach him save from Thee.”

Another laudation he recited was :

“No deity is there save Allah ; the One, without any associate ; His is the dominion and for Him are all praises ; and He is potent over everything There is no strength, no power save in Allah.”

He also recited :

“No deity is there save Allah, we worship none save Him ; His are the favours and praises and excellences. No deity is there save Allah, we worship none save Him ; (we) make religion exclusive for Him howsoever it may displease the disbelievers.”

He told his followers that it was commendable to recite *Subhān Allah* (Glory be to God), thirty-three times; *Al-hamdu lillah* (All praise be to God), thirty-three times; *Allah-o-Akbar* (God is Great), thirty-three times and then *Lā ilah illallah, wahdahu, lā sharik lahū, lahū-ul-mulko wa lahul hamd wa huwa ‘ala kull-i-shayin qadeer* (There is no deity save Allah, the One, without an associate unto Him; to Him belongs the dominion and all praise and He is potent over everything.) In accordance with another report attributed to the Prophet, *Allah-o-Akbar* (God is Great) is to be recited thirty-four times to complete this litany.

The Prophet used always to offer at least twelve *rak'ats* of additional prayers : four before the *zuhr* prayer and two after it, two after the *maghrib*, two after *‘isha* and two before the *fajr* prayers. These *sunnat* prayers were often performed by him in his own house but he never missed them. Normally, he performed a prayer constantly once he started offering it.

In the *sunnat* prayers mentioned above, those of the *fajr* are more meritorious. It is related by 'Āyesha that the Prophet attached greatest importance to the two *rak'ats* of *fajr* prayer. She also says that the Prophet normally performed the *nafl* and *sunnat* prayers in his house and never gave up the *witr* prayer whether he was travelling or at home. In this way the *sunnat* of the *fajr* and *witr* have a greater importance among all the other supplementary prayers. After offering the *sunnat* of the *fajr* prayers, the Prophet used to lie down, leaning to the right, for taking a brief rest. In regard to the congregational prayers, he is reported to have said: "Prayer offered with the congregation has an excellence twenty-seven times greater than that offered alone."¹ 'Abdullah b. Mas'ud relates: "We have seen the times when only the hypocrites missed the congregational prayer. Even those offered prayers in the congregation who came to join it with the help of two persons."²

The holy Prophet never missed the *tahajjud* (mid-night) prayers whether he was at home or out on excursion. If he was ever unable to offer them owing to sleep or illness, he offered twelve *rak'ats* in lieu of it during the day. In the night he offered eleven or thirteen *rak'ats* (including *witr*). The *tahajjud* and *witr* prayers were performed in different ways: he recited the *qunūt* in *witr*; the recitation during the night was often audible but sometimes inaudible; sometimes he made the *rak'ats* longer or shortened them; and offered the *witr* mostly in the later part of the night. The *nafls* or supererogatory prayers were performed, during the journeys, on the mount facing the direction he was going while the *rukū* (genuflexion) and *sajdah* (prostration) were observed just by making signs for the same.

1. *Sahihain*.

2. *Muslim*: This injunction is for men only. The prayers performed by women at home have a greater excellence than those offered in the mosque. 'Abdullah b. Mas'ud quotes the Prophet, "Prayers offered by women in their sleeping chamber is better than that in the varandah and that in a closet is better than the one in sleeping chamber." "(Abū Dawūd)

The holy Prophet and his companions used to offer thanksgiving prostration on every divine favour or on being saved from any menace. If they came across a Quranic verse mentioning prostration, they performed the prostration instantly with *Allah-o-Akbar*.

Friday was hallowed and certain additional prayers—not performed on other days—were observed on that day. He instructed his companions to take bath and perfume themselves and make haste in going for the Friday prayers. This was to be regarded as his *sunnah*. The Prophet used to recite the *Sūratul Kahf* on Fridays and put on the best dress he had on that day. Imām Ahmad quotes the Prophet in the *Musnad*, on the authority of Abū Ayyūb Ansārī, as saying, “If one takes bath on the Friday, and perfumes, and puts on a nice dress and then goes to the mosque in a dignified manner, and there he offers such voluntary prayers as he desires, without causing inconvenience to anyone, and keeps quiet from the time the Imām ascends the pulpit (i.e. listens the sermon attentively), then it would serve as an expiation of one’s sins from one Friday to another.” *Sahihain* record a saying of the Prophet related by Abū Hurairah: “There is an auspicious moment on every Friday; if a believer is engaged in prayer and supplicates to God at that moment, God shall answer his prayer.” Scholars differ about the appointed hour of this auspicious moment but the majority view is that it arrives sometimes after the *‘asr* prayer. A large number of companions and their disciples and Imām Ahmad hold his view.

The Prophet, used to deliver a brief sermon before the Friday prayer but prolonged the prayer itself. He spent sufficient time in the recollection of God and exhorted others to do the same. In his sermons, the Prophet usually explained the creed and practices of Islam, forbade what he considered necessary or commanded acts he desired to be carried out. While delivering the sermons, he never took the sword in his hand but before the pulpit was erected he used to lean on a bow or a staff. He used to stand for delivering the first part of the

sermon, then sat down for a little while, and thereafter concluded it with the latter part of the sermon. Bilāl recited *iqāmah* immediately after the sermon was concluded.

The prayers of the two 'Ids were performed in the *Idgāh*; only once he performed the prayer of 'Id in his own mosque owing to rains. He used to put on the nicest dress he had on the occasion of 'Id. The Prophet used to take a few dates, usually odd in number, before going for the prayer of 'Id-ul-Fitr but he took nothing on 'Id-ul-Azhā until he returned from the 'Idgāh. He took a little meat of the sacrificed animal on return. He used to take bath on the two 'Ids and offer these prayers without *iqāmah* or *azān*. The Prophet and his companions never offered any prayer in the 'Idgāh before or after the 'Id prayers. The sermon was delivered after the 'Id prayers and the number of *takbirs* in it were increased.¹ After the prayer was over, the Prophet turned towards the congregation, exhorted them and gave such directions as he desired or else sent out a detachment, if the occasion demanded. Thereafter he went to the women and exhorted them to be benevolent. The women, it is reported, contributed to charities with both hands. The Prophet repeated the *takbīr* in his sermons of the 'Ids. He went for the 'Id prayer by one way but returned by another route.

The Prophet had also performed the prayer of *kusūf* (eclipse of sun) and delivered a sermon on that occasion. Once the Prophet offered the *kusūf* prayer when his son Ibrāhīm had died. He discountenanced superstitious notions in his sermon in which he said :

“Verily the sun and moon are two signs of God, and are not eclipsed on account of the life or death of any person. Whenever you see them, remember God and supplicate to Him, Glorify Him and offer prayers and give out alms.”²

1. There is a difference of opinion about the number of *takbirs* in the 'Id prayer among the jurists. The books on law discuss the subject in detail.
2. *Bukhārī, Chap. Sadaqāt fil kusūf.*

Istisqa prayer (for bringing down rains) is reported to have been offered by the Prophet in different ways. In regard to burial service the Prophet's way was different from all other people¹. The prayer offered at the time of burial consisted of devotion and adoration of God as well as supplication and invocation of blessings on the dead.² The Prophet and his followers used to stand as in other prayers, praise and glorify the Lord and seek divine forgiveness for the dead since the burial service was primarily meant to supplicate for the departed soul. When the Prophet went to the graveyard, he prayed for all the persons buried there and beseeched divine blessings for them. He instructed his companions to utter the following while visiting a graveyard.

"Peace be on the believers and the Muslims resting here; we are also, God willing, about to meet you; we seek well-being for us and you from God."

*Zakāt and Charities.*³

The Prophet's attitude towards wealth whether it belonged to him or to the members of his household, typically reflected his outlook towards life, riches and the world at large. It was the attitude of a man to whom the Grandeur and All Powerfulness of God were self-evident realities, whose conduct reflected the morals of God and whose gaze was ever fixed on the Day of Resurrection and final Judgement. He used to remark very often :

"O Allah, there is no life except the life of the hereafter."⁴

The Prophet used to pray God for himself and his dependants thus :

"(I wish) to have a square meal on one day and go hungry on the other."⁵

1. For details see *Zād-al-Ma'ād*, Vol. I

2. The details will be found in the books of *fiqh* and *hadith*.

3. For a detailed discussion of *Zakāt* see *Fiqh-uz-Zakāt* by Dr. Yusuf al-Qurzāvi, besides other books of *fiqh* and *hadith*.

4. *Bukhārī*.

5. *Tirmidhi*.

“O Allah, grant sustenance to the progeny of Muhammad only as much as it is necessary to sustain (their) life.”¹

The Prophet never liked to keep with him anything in excess of his needs or the money received by him for being given out in charity. ‘Āyesha relates :

“During the Prophet’s last illness I had six or seven dinārs with me. He instructed me to give them to the poor and the needy, but I could not get time to do so owing to his illness. He asked me again what I had done with those dinārs. I replied that I had forgotten to give them out because of his illness. He sent for the coins, and taking them in his hand, said, “What would be supposed of the Prophet of God if he meets his Lord while this still remains with him.”²

Another *hadīth* reports the Prophet as saying :

“He who has a conveyance in excess of his need should give it to him who has no conveyance; he who has some provisions in excess should give it to him who is without it.”³

Describing the Prophet’s practice of dealing out alms Ibn Qayyim writes :

“The Prophet spent most of his wealth in charities. Whatever was bestowed by God on him, he always took a moderate view of it. If anybody asked him for any thing that he had, he gave it to him without a second thought. He gave out everything without the least consideration of his own needs. Actually he liked to give out alms and charities and took such a joy in giving away something to others as was seldom felt by the man receiving it. Surpassing everybody in generosity, he gave away with an open hand. If anyone in

1. *Bukhārī*.

2. *Bukhārī*, *Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal* and *Sunan Ibn Majah*.

3. Abū Dawūd on the authority of Abū Sae’ed Khudrī, cited from the *Four Pillars of Islam*, p. 149.

need of anything came to him for help, he always gave him precedence over himself and lavished upon him clothes or food or whatever he wanted. His help was showered down in different ways; sometimes he assigned a thing to someone, sometimes it was given as a gift and sometimes by way of alms. Often he purchased a thing and then gave back both the thing purchased and the price, as he once did with Jābir. Sometimes he took a loan and returned it with an addition or purchased something and gave more than the price demanded. If he accepted a gift, he gave another gift better and many times more costly than the one given to him. In short, his munificence took varied and novel shapes in helping others bounteously.”¹

In regard to *zakaat* the instruction given by the Prophet for its period and method of assessment, eligibility to pay it and the purposes for which it should be utilized are too well-defined and comprehensive. They take note of the needs of the well-to-do as much as the needy and the poor. *Zakaat* purifies the wealth of the rich and makes them eligible to receive divine favours.²

The *zakaat* collected from the rich in any area was got distributed by the Prophet among the poor and the destitute in the same locality. It was brought to him for distribution to others only when it was in excess of the requirements of the people where it was collected. He used to send the collectors of *zakaat* only to the people who possessed such recognizable goods (*amwāl-i-zāhirah*) as chattels, cultivations, groves etc. He instructed the collectors of *zakaat* to accept not the best of the produce but that of moderate quality and value. The Prophet also instructed to pay *fitrah* before leaving for 'Id prayers.

1. *Zād-al-Ma'ād*, Vol. I, p. 156

2. The Qur'ān says : "Take alms of their wealth, wherewith thou mayest purify them and may make them grow, and pray for them. Lo! thy prayer is an assaugement for them." (9 : 103)

Saum and the Prophet's Practice¹

Fasting was made obligatory in 2 A. H. and the Prophet left this fleeting world after he had kept the fasts of Ramadhān of 9 A. H.

The way the Prophet kept fasts made it a perfect and sure means of achieving its objectives (self-reformation and complete submission to God) without turning it into penance or self-mortification. During the month of Ramadhān, the various acts of worship offered by the Prophet were intensified: Gabriel paid a visit to him, and listened the Qur'ān recited by him. Whenever Gabriel called upon the Prophet, his munificence knew no bounds; during such periods he showered down alms and gifts on others with both hands. During Ramadhān the Prophet paid varied divine honours which were normally not offered in other months. Sometimes he fasted continuously although he forbade his companions to do the same. When the companions invited his attention to his own practice, he replied, "I am not like you. I spend my nights (day, according to another report) with my Lord, who gives me sustenance." He placed great emphasis on *sahūr*, the pre-dawn meal, and declared it to be his *sunnah*. Anas b. Mālik relates that the Prophet said, "Take the *sahūr*, for the *sahūr* carries blessings."² He is also reported to have said: "The *sahūr* makes our fast different from that of the *ahl-al-kitāb*."³ The Prophet forbade to delay the fast-breaking and described the practice as a source of evil and the usage of dogmatics among the *ahl-al-kitāb*. He once said, "People will remain safe and secure so long as they will make haste when (the time for) *iftār* arrives,"⁴ and also, "*Dīn* (religion) will be victorious so long as the people will make haste in *iftār*, for the Jews and Christians purposely delay it."⁵ In the *sahūr* the Prophet and his compa-

1. Compressed from the *Zād-al-Ma'ād*, Vol I, pp. 151-55

2. *Sahihain, Tirmidhi and Nassā'i*

3. *Muslim*.

4. *Sahihain, Muwattā and Tirmidhi*.

5. *Bukhārī, chap. Faḍl man Qām Ramadhān*.

nions used to make delay until its time was about to expire.

The prophet used to break the fast by taking a few fresh dates and if these were not available he took dried ones or simply water before offering the prayer. While breaking the fast he used to say :

“O Allah, I kept the fast for Thee and break it with Thy sustenance.”

He also used to observe :

“Thirst is quenched, the veins are wet and, God-willing, the reward is absolutely certain.”

The Prophet used also to make interruptions in the fast during the Ramadhān : often he fasted, often not, and allowed the companions to observe or discontinue fasting. If an enemy was about to attack, he instructed the companions to refrain from fasting so that they may remain fit to face the enemy. However, it was during Ramadhān that he had to fight some of the decisive battles, such as, the battle of Badr and also had to set out for the conquest of Mecca during which the congregation kept increasing until in the fourth night there was such a huge throng that the Prophet's mosque proved insufficient to accommodate all of them. That night the Prophet came out of his house only for the *fajr* prayer, although on the first three nights he had led the *tarāwīh* prayers. After prayer was over, he addressed the people, saying, “It is not that I was not aware of your assembly here in such numbers, but I was apprehensive of this (*tarāwīh*) prayer being made obligatory for you, and then you might not be able to act up to it.” The observance of *tarāwīh* prayers remained optional until the death of the Prophet.¹ After him his companions kept up the practice enthusiastically and ultimately it became the distinguishing mark of the *ahl-sunnat-wal-jamā-at*.²

1. Bukhārī, chap. *Faḍl man qām Ramadhān*.

2. A fuller discussion of the beginning of Ramadhān and the special attention paid to it by Caliph ‘Umar can be seen in the books of *hadīth* and *fiqh*.

At times the Prophet used to go on fasting continuously and sometimes he left it altogether. When he fasted continuously it seemed as if he would go on with the fast for ever, when he left it one thought that he would not fast any more. But he never fasted for the whole month at a stretch except in the month of Ramadhān. He also fasted more during Sha'bān than in any other month. He fasted specially on Mondays and Thursdays. 'Abdullah b. 'Abbās says, "The Prophet never missed the fast during the *ayyām al-abyadh* (i. e. the bright days or the 13th, 14th, and the 15th of each lunar month) whether he was travelling or in his home."¹

He also commanded others to fast on these days. He was very particular about the fast on the 'ashūra day (i. e. the tenth of Moharram). Once when he was fasting on the day of 'ashūra he was told that the day was deemed as consecrated by the Jews and Christians. He replied, "God willing, if I remain alive I will fast on the ninth also."

The Prophet never fasted on the day of 'arafa nor he was given to unbroken fasting for several days. It is related in authentic *ahādīth* that he said: "Allah liked most the fasts of Dāwūd who fasted on alternate days."²

The Prophet often used to enquire on coming to his house if there was anything to eat. If the reply was in negative, he used to say, "Alright, I am fasting today."

It was the practice of the Prophet to observe '*aitikāf*' during the last ten days of Ramadhān. Once when he missed it, he retired in '*aitikāf*' during Shawwāl. He used to remain in '*aitikāf*' for ten days each year, but in the year he died he retired for twenty days. Gabriel used to go over the whole Qur'ān with the Prophet once every year but during his last year he completed the recital twice."³

1. *Nassā'i*.

2. *Muslim, Kitāb-us-Siyām*.

3. Seeking retirement in a mosque during the last ten days of Ramadhān and spending the time in prayer, recitation of the Qur'ān and recollection of God.

4. Compressed from *Zād-al-Ma'ād*, Vol. I, pp. 158-76.

Prophet's Hajj and 'Umra¹

There is no difference of opinion that after the *hijrah*, the holy Prophet performed only one *hajj* which is known as '*Hijjatul wid'a*' in 10 A. H. *Hajj* was accordingly made incumbent in 9 or 10 A. H. The Prophet performed, after the *hijrah*, three or four '*umras*', all in the month of Dhul Q'ada.

A brief description of the *hajj* performed by the Prophet is given here.²

When the Apostle of Allah decided to go for the pilgrimage he got a public announcement made and the people started making preparation for the journey.

Large numbers came to Medīna as the news spread and even larger throngs joined the Apostle in the way until it became difficult to count the multitude. The swarming crowd of the faithful around the Apostle set out from Medina on Saturday, the 25th of Dhul Q'ada, after performing the four *rak'ats* of *zuhr* prayer followed by a sermon in which he explained the essentials of putting on the *ihram*.

The Messenger of God then went ahead raising his voice in the praise of God: "At Thy service, O God, at Thy service, at Thy service; Thou hast no partner, at Thy Service; Praise and Grace art Thine and the Dominion; Thou hast no partner." The entire crowd chanted this *talbia* alongwith the Apostle, some curtailed a few words while others supplemented it with a few more in a tremor of excitement; but the Apostle did not admonish them. The Apostle of Allah kept on repeating these words until he reached 'Araj where he encamped. Abū Bakr and the Apostle rode the same dromedary.

The stages ahead in the journey were at al-Abwā', the wadi of 'Asfān, Sarif and then Dhi Tuwa where he stayed during the Saturday night. It was now the 4th of Dhil Hijja. The

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1. For the detailed discussion of *hajj* and its wisdom see the chapter *Hajj* in the author's *Four Pillars of Islam*.
 2. We have drawn these details from the *Zād-al-Mā'ād* which gives the most authentic description of the Prophet's *hajj*.

Prophet offered the morning prayer at that place and also took bath before proceeding onwards. The caravan now bent its steps towards Mecca and entered the valley from its heights. It was an hour or so before noon when his *glance* fell on the Ka'ba. He exclaimed : "O God increase the honour and estimation and deference and awe of Thy House"; and then lifting up his hands, he raised his voice to say, "God is Great," and then said, "Thou art Peace, O God ! Peace is from Thee ; O God ! cause us to live in peace."

The first thing he did on entering the sanctuary was to go straight to the Ka'ba. He kissed the *Hajar Aswad*, the sacred black stone studded in the north-east corner, and then moved on to encompass the Ka'ba seven times, commencing on the right and leaving the Ka'ba to his left. He went round the circuits, thrice at a quick step and then took four rounds at a slow pace,¹

The Apostle was taking quicker steps but the paces were not long. The seamless garment in which he had wrapped himself was thrown loosely on one shoulder, the other being left bare.² Each time he passed the *Hajar Aswad*, he touched it with the stick in his hand and kissed it. Thereafter he took to the *Muqām-i-Ibrāhīm* and recited the Quranic verse : "Take as your place of worship the place where Ibrāhīm stood (to pray)"³, and offered two *rak'ats* of prayer at the place. Going to the *Hajar Aswad* after the prayer, he kissed it again and then he took himself to As-Safā from the door opposite him. On reaching near As-Safā, the Apostle said : "Lo ! As-Safā and Al-Marwā are among the indications of Allah. I begin with what Allah began with."

Then he went to As-Safā from where the Ka'ba was within his sight. Facing the *qibla*, he again proclaimed the greatness

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1. The act of circumambulating Ka'ba is known as *ramal*. For details see any book on pilgrimage.
 2. This is technically known as *istib'ā*.
 3. Q. 2 : 125

of God, saying :

“There is no god but God alone who has no partner : to Him belongs the dominion ; to Him all praise is due ; and He is omnipotent. There is no god but God who alone has fulfilled His promise, helped His servant and has alone routed the confederates.”

The Apostle remained in Mecca from Saturday to Wednesday. On Thursday morning he came to Mecca alongwith other Muslims, performed the *zuhr* and *‘asr* prayers and stayed there for the night. It was the night before Friday. After the sun had risen he made for the ‘Arafāt where he saw the tent pitched for him at Namirah. God’s Messenger rested in the tent and when the sun had passed the meridian he ordered his camel Qaswa to be brought to him. When it had been saddled for him he went down on it into the valley and addressed the people. He explained to the people the fundamental principles of Islam and struck at the roots of polytheism and ignorance. He commanded the people to treat as inviolable and sacrosanct the life, honour and property of every man—as warranted by every religion—and declared that all the usages and customs of the pagan past were trampled underneath his feet. The usury of the pre-Islamic days was abolished by the Apostle although he allowed recovery of the original sums lent to the debtors. The Apostle dwelt in his sermon on the rights of women, threw light on the mutual obligations of the husband and wife and bade the people to deal kindly and provide food and clothing to their spouses in a fitting manner. Thereafter referring to the Book of God he told his companions that if they continued to hold it fast they would not fall into error. Finally, he told that on the Day of Judgement God would ask them about him, so what answer would they give on that Day. The entire congregation replied, as one man, that they would testify that he had conveyed the message and fulfilled his mission. Then, raising his hands towards the sky the Aspostle said, “O God, be a witness,” repeating it thrice. He asked those present to inform those about it who were absent.

The sermon ended, and the Prophet asked Bilāl to give the call to prayer. After the call was over, he performed the noon and afternoon prayers, performing only two *rak'ats* of each. The day he delivered this sermon was Friday.

The Apostle then mounted his camel and came to *mauqif*,¹ the place of standing, where he remained on the back of his camel until sunset, lamenting, beseeching and glorifying the Lord. He appeared to be tormented and disconsolate, repeatedly raising his hands in prayer to his chest, like a man bereaved and indigent, crying for his livelihood. He was heard saying :

“O God, Thou hearest what I say ; and seest where I am, and knoweth what I conceal or reveal. Nothing can remain hidden from Thee. I am tormented, indigent and miserable, seeking refuge with Thee as one sorrow-stricken and horrified. I acknowledge my sins and confess my faults ; I call upon Thee like a beggar and cry unto Thee like an abased sinner ; I beseech Thee like one who is dismayed and harassed, fallen prone before Thee, shedding tears ; like one who has thrown oneself at Thy feet and is licking the dust. O God, cause me not to fail in my supplications to Thee ; be Kind and Merciful unto me ; Lo ! Thou art the Best of all those who are implored and the Most Generous of all the givers.”

It was then that God sent down the revelation : “This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour unto you and have chosen for you as religion AL-ISLAM.” (5 : 2).

When the disc of the sun had disappeared, the Prophet left ‘Urfa with Usāmā up on his dromedary behind him, and wended ahead slowly, holding the halter of his camel in a way that his head, bowed in submission to God, almost touched the saddle. The Apostle of Allah was repeating the *talbia*. “At Thy service, O God, at Thy service.....,” and asking the

1. A place in Arafāt still known by that name.

people to proceed slowly and gently. He kept raising his voice in the *talbia*, until he reached Muzdalifa. There he ordered Bilāl to give the call to prayer and performed the sun-set prayers before even the camels were knelt down and unloaded. He recited the night prayers after the camels had been unloaded and then went to take rest and slept till dawn.

Having performed the dawn prayers early in the morning, the Prophet mounted Qaswa and came to *Mash'ar al-Harām*, the sacred site in Muzdalifa, where facing the *qibla*, he continued supplicating God and glorifying Him until the morning light was clear. Then he left Muzdalifa with Fazl b. 'Abbās up behind him on his dromedary, chanting the *talbia* all the way. He asked Ibn 'Abbās to pick up seven small pebbles for *rami jamār*¹. When he came to the middle of the valley of Muhassar, he urged his camel to go fast and passed the plain quickly for it was the place where punishment was inflicted on the army of Abrahā. The Prophet came to Mina and from there to the *jamarāt ul-'aqaba*². There he cast the pebbles after the sun had well risen and ended it with the recitation of the *talbia*.

Returning to Mina, the Prophet delivered a glowing address in which he dwelt on the sacredness of *yaum-un-nahr*³ and the significance God had assigned to the day. He elucidated the honour and distinction conferred by God on Mecca over all the cities of the world and called upon the people to follow whoever ruled over them in accordance with the Book of God. Then, asking the people present there to learn the rites of pilgrimage from him, the Prophet urged them not to revert to the ways of the infidels, killing one another after him. He asked those present to convey everything he had told them to those who were absent. Thereafter he said :

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1. Throwing of the pebbles at the pillars, or *Jamrah* in Mina, which mark the spot where the devil had approached Ibrāhīm and Ismā'il.
 2. These are three pillars : *ūla* the first, *wusta* the second, and *'aqaba* the last.
 3. The day of sacrifice, the tenth day of Dhul Hijja.

“Worship your Lord, offer prayers five times a day, observe fast for a month (in Ramadhān), obey those of you who are in authority and you shall enter the paradise of your Lord.”

The Prophet also said something to his companions on this occasion which alluded to his valediction and hence the pilgrimage came to be known as the *Hijjatul Wid'a* or Farewell Pilgrimage.

Thereafter he went to the place of sacrifice in Mina and sacrificed sixty-three camels with his own hand—the number of sacrificed camels being the same as the years he remained alive. He ordered 'Alī to sacrifice the remainder to make up a total of one hundred camels sacrificed on his behalf. The sacrifice having been completed, he sent for the barber, got his head shaved and distributed his shaved hair among the people. Then he returned to Mecca on his camel and went round the Ka'ba again. After that he came near the well of Zamzam and drank its water with out sitting down, and returned to Mina the same day. He spent the night at Mina and stayed there until the sun had passed the meridian; then left for lapidation of the *jamrah*. Starting from the first one he went on to throw pebbles on the middle and finally on the last *jamrah*. The Prophet delivered two sermons at Mina, one on the Day of Sacrifice which has been mentioned earlier, and the next on the day after.

The Prophet tarried at the place to perform the lapidation at the *jamrah* on the three days after the Day of Sacrifice, known as *ayyām-i-tashriq*¹. Thereafter he left for Mecca; first he circumambulated the House of God at dawn for taking leave of the sacred House and asked his companions to get ready to depart. Then he set forth for Medina.²

1. *Ayyām-i-tashriq* are the days from the 9th to the 13th of *Dhul Hijja*.
2. This account of Farewell Pilgrimage has been condensed from the detailed description given in the *Zād-ul-Ma'ād* (Vol. I, pp. 180—249). The matters pertaining to the legal aspects of the pilgrimage have been left out.

Having arrived at Ghadīr Khum¹, the Prophet addressed the people again and said :

“Whoever loves me should love ‘Ali also. O God, hold him dear who is attached to ‘Ali and be hostile to him who bears ill-will to ‘Ali.”²

The Prophet bivouacked for the night at Dhul Hulaifa. When the outskirt of Medina came into sight he raised his voice to say, “God is Great”, three times and then said, “There is no god but God ; He is one, without a partner ; to Him belongs the dominion and the praise and He has power over all things ; (We are) the returning and the repenting and the submitting and worshipping ; God has fulfilled His promise and helped His bondman and He alone has routed the confederates.”³

The Prophet entered Medīna in the broad daylight.

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1. A place midway between Mecca and Medina, about three km. from Juhfa.
2. On the authority of Ahmad and Nassā'i. The reason for the Prophet's address on this occasion was that certain persons who were displeased with ‘Ali had made a complaint against him to the Prophet. These persons had been sent with ‘Ali to Yemen and they had charged him of being unjust in some of his dealings but their complaint was found to be incorrect and based on misunderstanding and that he had not been impartial in his dealings, (*Ibn Kathīr*, Vol. IV, p. 415-16)
3. *Zād-al-Ma'ād*, Vol. I, p. 249

V

LITANIES FOR SPECIFIC OCCASIONS

Ever conscious of Divine presence and always submissive to God, the holy Prophet presented a sublime picture of one celebrating the praise of the Lord. His tongue and heart were always engaged in God's glorification. The Prophet instructed his companions to send up this prayer when they intended to retire for sleep :

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسَلْتُ وَجْهِي إِلَيْكَ، وَفَوَّضْتُ أَمْرِي إِلَيْكَ، وَأَلْجَأْتُ ظَهْرِي
 إِلَيْكَ، رَغْبَةً وَرَهْبَةً إِلَيْكَ، لَا مَلْجَأَ وَلَا مَنَاجِيكَ إِلَّا إِلَيْكَ، آمَنْتُ
 بِكِتَابِكَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلْتَ، وَنَبِيِّكَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلْتَ .

“O Allah ! I have turned my countenance toward Thee; and entrusted my affair to Thee; and placed my back beside Thee for Thy awe and liking. No abode and no refuge is there save in Thee. I have given faith to the Book sent down by Thee and to the Prophet appointed by Thee.”

He told them that these ought to be the words last uttered by them before going to sleep. And if they died that very night, they would die as if it were a death in the connatural state.

O getting up from his sleep, the prophet used to say :

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَحْيَانَا بَعْدَ مَا أَمَاتَنَا وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ.

“Thanks be to God who revived us after taking our life and we have to revert to Him.”

Whenever he woke up in the night he said :

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ . اللَّهُمَّ اسْتَغْفِرْكَ لِذَنْبِي . وَ أَسْأَلُكَ رَحْمَتَكَ .
اللَّهُمَّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا ، وَلَا تُزِغْ قَلْبِي بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنِي ، وَمَبِّئْنِي بِكَ لَدُنْكَ
رَحْمَةً ، إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَسَّاسُ

“No god is there save Thee. Thou art Holy. O Allah ! I pray for the forgiveness of my sins and seek Thy mercy. O my Lord ! increase my knowledge and do not distort my heart after guiding me aright. Bless me from thy presence; verily Thou art the Best Giver.”

‘Abdullah b. ‘Abbās relates that the night he slept in the house of the Prophet he saw that on awakening the Prophet raised his head as if gazing at the sky and recited the last ten verses of *Surah Āle Imrān* i. e. from, “Lo ; In the creation of the heavens and the earth”, to the end. After performing the *witr* prayer the Prophet used to say thrice, “Glorified is the Holy Lord,” and uttered it in the last almost in a chanting tone. Whenever he went out of his house he used to say :

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللَّهِ ، اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ أَنْ أَجِلَّ ، أَوْ أُضَلَّ
أَوْ أَرَلَّ أَوْ أَرْوَلَ ، أَوْ أَظْلَمَ أَوْ أُظْلَمَ ، أَوْ أَجْهَلَ أَوْ يُجْهَلَ عَلَيَّ .

“In the name of Allah (I walk). I put my trust in Allah.
O Allah ! I seek Thy refuge from misguidance or

being misled ; stumbling (myself) or being made to stumble ; oppressing others or being oppressed ; or, acting ignorantly or being treated as one ignorant."

Abu Sa'eed Khudri relates that the Prophet taught the following litany to be recited while going for prayers :

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِحَقِّ السَّائِلِينَ عَلَيْكَ . وَبِحَقِّ مَنْشَأِي هَذَا إِلَيْكَ ، فَإِنِّي
لَمْ أَخْرُجْ بَطَرًا وَلَا أَشْرًا وَلَا رِيَاءً وَلَا سُمْعَةً . وَإِنَّمَا خَرَجْتُ إِنْقَاءَ
سَخَطِكَ وَابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِكَ ، أَسْأَلُكَ أَنْ تُقَدِّدَنِي مِنَ النَّارِ . وَأَنْ تُغْفِرَ لِي
ذُنُوبِي ، فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ

"O Allah ! I ask Thee for the sake of those who beseech Thee and by virtue of bending my steps to Thee ; I set forth neither arrogantly, nor boastfully, nor as a hypocrite, nor yet for ostentation ; but as one going out is Thy awe in search of Thy pleasure. I ask Thee to save me from the Fire and Forgive me my sins. None is there to forgive the sins save Thee."

He told that anyone who recites these words is attended by seventy thousand angels who seek divine forgiveness for him and the Lord relents towards him until he finishes his prayer. The Prophet also told that anyone entering a mosque should recite the *darūd* and thereafter say :

اللَّهُمَّ افْتَحْ لِي أَبْوَابَ رَحْمَتِكَ .

"O Allah : Open the gates of Thy mercy for me. "

While coming out of the mosque, the Prophet said, one should recite :

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ فَضْلِكَ .

"O Allah ! I ask for Thy grace."

In the morning the Prophet used to say :

اللَّهُمَّ بِكَ أَصْبَحْنَا وَبِكَ أَمْسَيْنَا، وَبِكَ نَحْيَا وَبِكَ نَمُوتُ، وَإِلَيْكَ
الْمُشُورُ .

“O Allah ! It is for Thee that we have our morning ; and for Thee is our evening ; and for Thee is our life and our death ; and we have to return to Thee.”

He also used to say :

أَصْبَحْنَا وَأَصْبَحَ الْمَلِكُ لِلَّهِ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ، لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحُكْمُ، وَمَوْعِدُهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ، رَبِّ أَسْأَلُكَ خَيْرَ مَا فِي هَذَا الْيَوْمِ وَخَيْرَ مَا بَعْدَهُ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ هَذَا الْيَوْمِ وَشَرِّ مَا بَعْدَهُ، رَبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْكَسَلِ، وَسُوءِ الْكِبَرِ، رَبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عَذَابٍ فِي النَّارِ، وَعَذَابٍ فِي الْقَبْرِ .

“We as well as this universe have attained the morntime for Allah. All praise is for Allah. There is no deity save Allah ; the One, without any partner unto Him. His is the dominion and for Him is the praise ; and He is potent over everything. O Lord ! we ask of Thee the good of this day and the day thereafter. And we ask for Thy shelter from the evil of this day and the day thereafter. O Lord ! we seek refuge in Thee from indolence and infirmity of age, and the torment of Hell, and the torment of grave.”

When it was close of the day, he used to say :

أَمْسَيْنَا وَأَمْسَى الْمَلِكُ لِلَّهِ

“We and the universe have attained the dusk for Allah.”

Once Abu Bakr requested the Prophet to teach him a prayer which could be recited by him every morning and evening. The Prophet told him to recite :

اللَّهُمَّ فَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ، عَالِمَ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ، رَبَّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ،
وَمَلِكِهِ، وَمَالِكِهِ، أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ، أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ
نَفْسِي، وَشَرِّ الشَّيْطَانِ وَشَرِّكَ، وَأَنْ أَتَقَرَّفَ عَلَى نَفْسِي سُوءًا، أَوْ
أَجْرًا إِلَى مُسْلِمٍ.

“O Allah ! The Creator of the heavens and the earth ; knower of the hidden and manifest ; Lord and Sovereign and Master of everything. I bear witness that there is no god save Thee. I seek Thy refuge from the evil of my own self, and the evil of Satan, and from his infidelity. And I seek Thy refuge from being wrongful to myself or doing wrong to a believer.”

The Prophet also instructed him to say in the morning :

أَصْبَحْنَا وَأَصْبَحَ الْمُلْكُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ خَيْرَ مَا
الْيَوْمَ، فَتَحَهُ وَنَصَرَهُ، وَنُورَهُ وَبَرَكَتَهُ، وَهُدَايَتَهُ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ
مَا فِيهِ وَشَرِّ مَا بَعْدَهُ.

“We and the universe have attained the morn for Allah, the Lord of the worlds. O Allah ! I ask for the well-being of this day and its victory and success and light and blessing and its guidance. And I seek refuge from its evil and the evil of the day thereafter.”

The Prophet also told him to substitute “evening” for the “morn” at the close of the day.

Once the Prophet said to his beloved daughter Fatima, “What is the difficulty if you recite (the following) every morning and evening ?”

يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ، بِكَ أَسْتَعِيْثُ، فَاصْلِحْ لِيْ شَأْنِيْ، وَلَا تَكِلْنِيْ إِلَى نَفْسِيْ
طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ.

“O’ Living and the Sustainer! I implore Thy mercy to straighten my affairs and commit me not to my desires even for a moment.”

The Prophet said that the best prayer for seeking divine forgiveness was to recite :

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَنْتَ رَبِّيْ لَا اِلَهَ اِلَّا اَنْتَ، خَلَقْتَنِيْ وَاَنَا عَبْدُكَ، وَاَنَا عَلَىٰ عَهْدِكَ
وَوَعْدِكَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ، اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا صَنَعْتُ، اَبُوْءُ اَكَ
بِعَمَلِكَ عَلَيَّ، وَاَبُوْءُ بِذَنْبِيْ، فَاغْفِرْ لِيْ، فَاِنَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ اِلَّا اَنْتَ.

“O Allah ! Thou art my Lord. There is no deity save thee. Thou hast created me and I am Thy servant. I put my trust in Thy covenant and promise, as much as it is within my power. I seek Thy refuge from the evils of my doings and acknowledge Thy grace and favours. I confess my sins for none can forgive me save Thee.”

Whenever the Prophet put on a new dress he used to say :

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَنْتَ كَسَوْتَنِيْ اَسْأَلُكَ خَيْرَهُ وَخَيْرَ مَا صُنِعَ لَهُ، وَاَعُوْذُ بِكَ
مِنْ شَرِّهِ وَشَرِّ مَا صُنِعَ لَهُ.

“O Allah ! Thou hast clad me with (such and such) dress. I seek its good and the grace for which it is made and seek Thy refuge from its evil and the ills accompanying its make.”

The Prophet is reported to have said that whoever recites the following litany while putting on a new dress, God would forgive his past sins.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي كَسَانِي هَذَا وَرَزَقَنِي مِنْ غَيْرِ حَوْلٍ سَمِيٍّ وَلَا قُوَّةٍ.

“Praise be to Allah who made me to wear this (dress) and granted it to me irrespective of my power and strength.”

When the Prophet gave a new raiment to Umm Khālid, he remarked :

أَبَدِي وَأَخْلَطِي، ثُمَّ أَبَدِي وَأَخْلَطِي.

“Make it rotten and old, again make it rotten and old.”

It is reported that he instructed to recite the following while entering one's house :

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ حَبْرَ الْمَوْجِ وَخَيْرَ الْخُرْجِ، بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَلِجْنَا وَعَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا.

“O Allah ! I ask Thee the good of entering and coming out (of the house). In the name of Allah we entered and placed reliance on Allah who is our Lord.”

While entering the lavatory he used to say :

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْخُبْثِ وَالْخَبَائِثِ.

“O Allah, I seek Thy refuge from the filth and the things filthy.”

Other reports relate that he recited the following :

الرَّجْسِ النَّجِسِ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ.

“(I seek refuge from) the filthy, foul and accursed Satan.”

When he came out of the lavatory he used to say :

عَفْرَانِكَ.

“I seek Thy forgiveness.”

He is also reported to have recited :

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَذْهَبَ عَنِّي الْإِذْيَ وَعَافَانِي.

“Praise be to Allah who relieved me of a thing troublesome and gave me facility.”¹

The Prophet said that if a man performed ablution with due care and said

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ، لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.

“I bear witness that there is no god save Allah, the One, without any partner, and bear witness that Muhammad (peace be on him) is his servant and apostle.”

Then all the eight gates of the Heaven shall be opened for him to enter it from the gate he wishes. Imām Tirmidhī reports the addition of following sentence to the above attestation.

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي مِنَ التَّوَّابِينَ وَاجْعَلْنِي مِنَ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ.

“O Allah! make me of those who seek forgiveness and attain purity.”

The Prophet was also heard entreating in the following manner :

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي ذَنْبِي، وَوَسِّعْ لِي فِي دَارِي، وَبَارِكْ لِي فِي رِزْقِي.

“O Allah! Forgive my sins, grant me expansion in my house and bless my sustenance.”

The Prophet also ordered to repeat the call to prayer on hearing it but to say : “There is no power, no strength save in Allah” in reply to the words, “Come for prayer” and “Come to

salvation.” After the call to prayer has ended, one should say :

رَضِيتُ بِاللّٰهِ رَبًّا ، وَبِالْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا ، وَبِمُحَمَّدٍ رَسُولًا .

“I acknowledge Allah as my Lord, Islam as my religion and Muhammad (peace be on him) as the apostle.”

Thereafter one should recite the *durūd* and repeat this prayer.

اَللّٰهُمَّ رَبَّ مُدَّةِ الدَّعْوَةِ التَّامَّةِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْقَائِمَةِ ، اَنْتَ مُحَمَّدًا بِالْوَسِيْلَةِ
وَالْفَضِيْلَةِ ، وَابْعَثْهُ مَقَامًا تَحْمُدُكَ اَلَّذِي وَعَدْتَهُ ، اِنَّكَ لَا تُخْلِفُ الْمِعَادَ .

“O Allah! the Lord of this excellent call and the prayers to be established, grant intercession and excellence to Muhammad (peace be on him) and help him to attain the Glorious Station as promised by Thee. Verily, thou dost not break Thy promise.”

When the holy Prophet took food, he began it with the words, “I begin in the name of Allah”, and said after finishing the meal :

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِي اَطْعَمَنَا وَسَقَانَا وَجَعَلَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ .

“Praise be to Allah, who fed us and quenched our thirst and made us submissive to Him.”

In a few reports the words, “fulfilled our needs and gave us an abode” are added to the above sentence. When the food was removed after meals, he used to say :

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ حَمْدًا كَثِيْرًا ، طَيِّبًا مُّبَارَكًا فِيْهِ ، غَيْرَ مَكْنِيٍّ وَلَا مُوَدِّعٍ
وَلَا مُسْتَعْنِيٍّ عَنْهُ ، رَبَّنَا عَزَّ وَجَلَّ .

“Praise be Allah, innumerable and goodly ; none can be unconcerned with or forsake or be heedless to Him. Our Lord is Noble, Illustrious.”

Once after taking his meals in the house of Sa'd b. 'Ubādā, the Prophet prayed :

أَفْطَرُ عِنْدَكُمْ الصَّائِمُونَ . وَأَكَلَ طَعَامَكُمْ الْإِبْرَارُ وَصَلَّتْ عَلَيْكُمْ مَلائِكَةٌ .

“People may break their fasts in your house, the pious may have their meals here and angels may pray for blessings to you.”

On witnessing a crescent he would say :

اللَّهُمَّ أَهْلَهُ عَلَيْنَا بِالْأَمْنِ وَالْإِيمَانِ ، وَالسَّلَامَةِ وَالْإِسْلَامِ ، رَبِّي وَرَبُّكَ اللَّهُ .

“O Allah, let this crescent rise with peace and faith and safety and Islam for us. Our Lord and thy (O moon) Lord is Allah.”

In a few *ahadith*, the following words are added to this prayer :

وَالْتَوْفِيقَ لِمَا تُحِبُّ وَتَرْضَى ، رَبَّنَا وَرَبَّكَ اللَّهُ .

“And with the grace liked by Thee and which finds Thy favour. (O moon) : Our Lord and thy Lord is Allah.”

Some other reports say that the Prophet also said :

هِلَالُ رُشْدٍ وَخَيْرٍ ، هِلَالُ رُشْدٍ وَخَيْرٍ .

“Crescent of goodness and virtue, of righteousness and excellence.”

Whenever the Prophet set out for a journey, he said :

اللَّهُمَّ بِكَ انْتَشَرْتُ، وَإِلَيْكَ تَوَجَّهْتُ، وَبِكَ اِعْتَصَمْتُ، وَعَلَيْكَ
تَوَكَّلْتُ، اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ يَقْنِي، وَأَنْتَ رَجَائِي، اللَّهُمَّ اكْفِنِي مَا أَهْمَنِي وَمَا
لَا أَعْمَلُ لَهُ، وَمَا أَنْتَ أَعْلَمُ بِهِ مِنِّي، عَزَّ جَارُكَ وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ، وَلَا
إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ، اللَّهُمَّ زِدْني التَّقْوَى، وَاغْفِرْ لِي ذُنُوبِي، وَوَجِّهْ لِي الْخَيْرَ
أَيْنَمَا تَوَجَّهْتُ.

“O Allah! I set out in Thy name; I turned to Thee, took Thy help and relied on Thee; Thou art my support and hope; accomplish for me the task I am in the look out, and also that of which I am heedless and which is better known to Thee. Glory is highest to Thee and Thy praise is the greatest. No deity is there save Thee. O Allah! bestow on me the provision of piety and forgive my sins and guide me towards virtue in whatever direction I bend my steps.”

When the Prophet rode an animal he used to recite *Allah-O-Akbar* (Allah is Great) thrice and then say :

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ لَنَا هَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لَهُ مُقْرِنِينَ، وَإِنَّا إِلَى رَبِّنَا
لَمُنْقَلِبُونَ.

“Glorified is He who subdued it for us; and it was beyond our competence. All of us are to revert to our Lord.”
Thereafter he used to say :

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ فِي سَفَرِي هَذَا الْبِرَّ وَالتَّقْوَى، وَمِنْ الْعَمَلِ
مَا تَرْضَى، اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ الصَّاحِبُ فِي السَّفَرِ وَالْخَلِيفَةُ فِي الْأَهْلِ، اللَّهُمَّ
إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ وَعَثَائِ السَّفَرِ وَكَآبَةِ الْمُنْقَلَبِ، هَوِّنْ عَلَيْنَا السَّفَرَ
وَاطْوِ لَنَا الْبُعْدَ.

“O Allah ! We ask Thee (to grant us) virtue and piety in this journey and the actions that please Thee. O Allah ! Thou art alone our companion in this journey and one who looks after our households in our absence. O Allah ! We seek Thy refuge from the troubles of the journey and the things distressing on our return. Make this journey easy for us and curtail its distance for us.”

On coming back from the journey he used to say :

آبُونُ تَائِبُونَ ، عَائِدُونَ ، رَبَّنَا حَامِدُونَ .

“We are the returning, repenting and worshipping and we glorify our Lord.”

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VI

A FEW COMPREHENSIVE PRAYERS OF THE PROPHET

Common litanies

We give here some of the common litanies found in a number of authentic collections of *ahadīth*. We have taken these from the *Kitab-ul-Azkar* by Imām Abū Zakariya Muhi-ud-dīn b. Yahyā, known as Imām Nuwawī, and *Talkhīs ul-Akhbār* by Maulānā Hakīm Saiyid ‘Abdul Ha’ī Hasanī.

It is related that the holy Prophet said that two expressions, easy to recite and weighty on *mizān* (balance) and also adored by the Compassionate are :

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ، سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ

“Glorified be Allah and praise be to Him,” and
“Glorified be Allah, the Great.”

Sumarah b. Jundub relates that the holy Prophet said that Allah, the Exalted, likes four expressions :

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

“Glorified is Allah, Praise be to Allah, There is no deity

save Allah and Allah is Great.” There is no harm which one of these you begin with.”

And the Prophet said :

الطَّهْرُ شَطْرُ الْإِيمَانِ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ تَمْلَأُ الْمِيزَانَ، وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ
وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ تَمْلَأْنَ، أَوْ تَمْلَأُ مَا بَيْنَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ .

“Cleanliness and purity constitute half of faith; ‘Praise be to God’, fills the *mizān*; while ‘Glorified is Allah and Praise be to Allah,’ fill the heavens and the earth.”

Abū Hurairah relates that the Prophet said :

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ.

“The expression : ‘Glorified is Allah, Praise be to Allah, no deity is there save Allah and Allah is Great,’ is dearer to me than all the things (i. e. the world) on which the sun rises.”

Abū Ayyūb Ansārī relates that the Prophet told him that the recitation of the following ten times is equivalent in merit to manumission of four slaves belonging to the progeny of Ismā’il.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ، لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ، وَهُوَ عَلَى
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ.

“No deity is there save Allah, the One, without a partner unto Him; His is the dominion and His are all praises and He is Potent over everything.”

Abū Hurairah relates that the Prophet said: Whoever recites the following a hundred times would earn the merit equivalent to the manumission of ten slaves. In addition, he will earn a hundred virtues and an equal number of his sins will be forgiven. He will be protected against Satan on that day from morning until evening and his good acts shall have a virtue

greater than those of all others except the man who excells him.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ، لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ، وَهُوَ عَلَى
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ.

“No deity is there save Allah, the One, without any partner unto Him; His is the dominion and His are all praise and He is Potent over everything.”

The Prophet also said that if anyone recites: “*Subhān Allāh wa be’hamdihi* (Glorified be Allah and praise is for Him), a hundred times in a day, then all his sins will be forgiven even though they be like the sea foam.”

Jābir b. ‘Abullāh reports the Prophet as saying that the best litany is *Lā ilah illallāh* (No deity is there but Allah).

Abū Darr reports that he heard the Prophet saying: “A charity is incumbent on all of you in lieu of every joint of your body. Thus *Subhān Allāh* (Glory be to Allah) is a charity and so are *Alhamdu lillāh* (All praises are for Allah), *Lā ilah illallāh* (No deity is there but Allah) and *Allāh-o-Akbar* (Allah is Great); and commanding the good and forbidding the wrong.” The Prophet also said that the two rakats of *chāshṭ*¹ prayer suffice for all these charities.

Abū Mūsā Ash-arī says that once the holy Prophet remarked, “Should I not tell you of a treasure of Paradise?” Abū Mūsā replied, “Why not.” Thereupon the Prophet asked him to recite: *Lā haula wala quwata illā billāh* (There is no power, no might, but from Allah).

Abū Sa‘eed Khudrī quoted the Prophet as saying that one becomes entitled to paradise if he says:

رَضِيتُ بِاللَّهِ رَبًّا، وَبِالْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا، وَبِمُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ
وَسَلَّمَ رَسُولًا.

1. A voluntary prayer when the sun has well risen.

"I acknowledge Allah as my Lord, Islam as my religion and Muhammad (peace in on him and his progeny) as the Prophet."

'Abdullah b. Mas'ūd relates that the Prophet told him that he met Ibrāhīm (on whom be peace) in the night of Ascension and the latter said to him, "O Muhammad, convey my greetings to your followers and tell them that the soil of paradise is fine and its water is sweet. It is empty and its plants are 'Subhan Allāh', 'Alhamdu lillah' and 'Allah-o-Akhbar.'"

'Amr b. 'Ās relates having heard the Prophet as saying :

"Whoever sends benedictions (*durūd*) once on me, Allah blesses him ten times."¹

'Abdullah b. Mas'ūd quoted the Prophet thus :

"He will be nearest to me on the Day of Judgement who recites *durūd* most for me."²

Abū Hurairah is on record that the Prophet told him :

"Woe unto him who does not recite *durūd* when I am mentioned before him."

Abū Hurairah also quoted the Prophet as saying :

"Do not make a shrine of my grave. Recite *durūd* for me for it reaches me no matter where you are."³

K'ab b. 'Ujrah relates that once when the Prophet came out of his closet, we said, "O Prophet of Allah, we know how to greet you. Now tell us how should we recite *durūd* for you." Thereupon the Prophet replied :

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى
آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، إِنَّكَ حَيُّ مُبْدِي، اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ،
كَأَنَّكَ بَارَكْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، إِنَّكَ حَيُّ مُبْدِي.

"O Allah! shower Thy peace on Muhammad and his

1. Muslim

2. Tirmidhi

3. Abū Dawūd.

descendants as Thou didst have Thy mercy on Ibrāhīm and his descendants; verily, Thou art the Praiseworthy, the Glorious: O Allah! bless Muhammad and his descendants as Thou blessedest Ibrāhīm and his descendants; verily, Thou art the Praiseworthy, the Glorious.”¹

A few comprehensive Supplications of the Prophet

A few comprehensive supplications of the holy Prophet, taken from *Al-wābil as-Sayyib* of ‘Allāma Ibn Qayyim are given below.

‘Ayesha relates that the Prophet liked to offer concise and comprehensive supplications rather than the lengthy ones. He prayed thus :

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ كُلِّهِ مَا عَلِمْتُ مِنْهُ وَمَا لَمْ أَعْلَمْ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الشَّرِّ كُلِّهِ مَا عَلِمْتُ مِنْهُ وَمَا لَمْ أَعْلَمْ.

“O Allah! I ask Thee of every good that I know or do not know. I seek Thy protection against every evil that I know or do not know.”

Anas b. Mālik says that he used to attend the Prophet and often heard him supplicating in this manner :

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَمِّ وَالْحُزْنِ، وَالْعَجْزِ وَالْكَسَلِ، وَالْبُخْلِ وَالْجُبْنِ، وَضَلَعِ الدَّيْنِ وَغَلَبَةِ الرِّجَالِ

“O Allah! I seek Thy protection against anxiety and affliction, against cowardice and indolence, against smallness and miserliness, and the burden of debt and being influenced by others.”

1. See *Jal'ā'il-Iḥām fī Salāt was Salām 'alā Khair il-Anām* of Ibn Qayyim and Maulānā Muhammad Zakariya's *Faṣā'il Durūd Shurif* for the merits of *durūd*. This form of *durūd* is testified by consensus.

‘Āyesha relates that the Prophet used to pray often :

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ فِتْنَةِ الْمَسِيحِ
الدَّجَالِ ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ فِتْنَةِ الْحَيَاةِ وَالْمَوْتِ ، اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ
مِنَ الْمَأْتِمِ وَالْمَغْرَمِ .

“O Allah ! I seek Thy refuge from the affliction of grave ; I seek Thy refuge from the menace of Dajjāl ; I seek Thy refuge from the afflictions of life and death ; O Allah ! I seek Thy refuge from sins and the burden of debt.”

When someone remarked that he disdained indebttness, the Prophet replied :

“When a man plunges into debt, he speaks lies and does not honour his promises.”¹

One of the supplications of the holy Prophet as related by ‘Abdullah b. ‘Umar was :

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ زَوَالِ نِعْمَتِكَ ، وَتَحَوُّلِ عَافِيَتِكَ ، وَمِنْ جَاءِ
نِقْمَتِكَ ، وَمِنْ جَمِيعِ سَخَطِكَ .

“O Allah ! I seek Thy refuge from withdrawal of Thy blessings and peace, and also from Thy sudden anger and displeasure in any way.”²

‘Āyeshā says that once she asked the Prophet, “O Messenger of Allah, were I to attain *Lailatul qadr*³, how should I beseech God.?” The Prophet replied :

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفْوٌ مُجِيبُ الْعَفْوِ فَاعْفُ عَنِّي .

1. *Sahihain*

2. *Sahih Muslim*

3. The night, one in the last ten days of Ramadhan, on which the Prophet received the call and the first few verses of the Qur’ān.

“O Allah! Thou art oft-forgiving and like those who forgive, so forgive me.”¹

‘Abdullah b. ‘Umar relates that the holy Prophet once told him: “What Allah likes most to be asked for is “peace.”²

Abū Mālik Ashja’ī says that the Prophet used to urge every new convert to Islam to pray thus:

اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِنِي وَأَرْزُقْنِي وَحَافِنِي وَارْحَمْنِي.

“O Allah, grant me guidance and sustenance, let me have peace and have mercy on me.”³

Busr b. Artāt relates that he heard the Prophet entreating to God:

اللَّهُمَّ أَحْسِنْ عَاقِبَتَنَا فِي الْأُمُورِ كُلِّهَا، وَأَجِرْنَا مِنْ خِزْيِ الدُّنْيَا
وَعَذَابِ الْآخِرَةِ.

“O Allah, let the best come out of all our affairs and save us from the shame of this world as well as the torment of hereafter.”⁴

The Prophet once asked his companions, relates Abū Huraira, whether they would like to send up a self-sufficing prayer? Everyone replied in the affirmative and then Prophet told them to entreat as under:

اللَّهُمَّ أَعِنَّا عَلَى ذِكْرِكَ وَشُكْرِكَ وَحُسْنِ عِبَادَتِكَ.

“O Allah, enable us to remember Thee and thank Thee and to worship Thee nicely.”⁵

The Prophet enjoined Ma’adh to entreat as below after every

1. *Trimidhi*
2. *Mustadrak Hākim.*
3. *Muslim.*
4. *Musnad Ahmad.*
5. *Mustadrak Hākim.*

prayer.¹ He also instructed it to other companions :

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ الْعَافِيَاتِ، وَفِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ، وَتَرْكَ الْمُنْكَرَاتِ، وَحُبَّ
السَّارِكِينَ، وَأَنْ تُتُوبَ عَلَيَّ وَتَغْفِرَ لِي وَتَرْحَمَنِي، وَإِذَا أَرَدْتَ فِي
خَلْقِكَ فَتَنَةً فَفِئْتِي إِلَيْكَ مِنْهَا غَيْرَ مُغْتَوِّنٍ، اللَّهُمَّ وَأَسْأَلُكَ حُبَّكَ وَحُبَّ
مَنْ يُحِبُّكَ، وَحُبَّ عَمَلٍ يُبَلِّغُنِي إِلَى حُبِّكَ.

“O Allah, We ask Thee for the good, and for doing the good, and for giving up the forbidden, and for the love of the poor. And we ask Thee to accept our repentance and to be Forgiving and Merciful to us. When Thou intendest to be hard to Thy creation, let us alone so that we are not put to hardship. O Allah! we ask Thee for Thy love, and the love of those who hold Thee dear and for every act that leads to Thy love.”²

‘Ayesha relates that the Prophet urged her to entreat as follows :

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ كُلِّهِ، عَاجِلِهِ وَآجِلِهِ، مَا عَلِمْتُ مِنْهُ وَمَا لَمْ
أَعْلَمْ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الشَّرِّ كُلِّهِ، عَاجِلِهِ وَآجِلِهِ، مَا عَلِمْتُ مِنْهُ وَمَا لَمْ أَعْلَمْ،
وَأَسْأَلُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَا قَرَّبَ إِلَيْهَا مِنْ قَوْلٍ أَوْ عَمَلٍ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ
وَمَا قَرَّبَ إِلَيْهَا مِنْ قَوْلٍ أَوْ عَمَلٍ، وَأَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مَا سَأَلْتُكَ
عَبْدُكَ وَرَسُولُكَ مُحَمَّدٌ، وَأَسْأَلُكَ مَا فَضَيْتَ لِي مِنْ أَمْرٍ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ
عَاقِبَتَهُ رُشْدًا.

“O Allah, we ask Thee for the good in its entirety, whether granted promptly or belatedly, and known to us or not ;

1. Tirmidhi

2. Mustadrak Hâkim

we seek Thy refuge from every evil, instant and deferred, known or unknown to us; we ask for Paradise from Thee and the word and deed that takes us nearer to it; we seek Thy refuge from the Fire and the word and deed that takes us nearer to it; we ask Thee for some of the good that is sought by Thy servant and Messenger Muhammad (peace be upon him); and we beseech Thee to let the best come out of whatever Thou decidest for us.¹

‘Abdullah b. Mas‘ūd relates this supplication from the Prophet :

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ مُوجِبَاتِ رَحْمَتِكَ، وَعَزَائِمَ مَغْفِرَتِكَ، وَالسَّلَامَةَ مِنْ كُلِّ إِثْمٍ، وَالْغَنِيَّةَ مِنْ كُلِّ بَرٍّ، وَالْفَوْزَ بِالْجَنَّةِ، وَالنَّجَاةَ مِنَ النَّارِ.

“O Allah, We ask Thee for the determinants of Thy mercy and forgiveness, protection against every evil, accomplishment of every virtue, the attainment of Paradise and salvation from the Fire.”²

1. *Mustadrak Hākim*.

2. *Ibid.* for wisdom of Prophetic litanies see (*Prophet Muhammad in the Mirror of His Supplications*), published by the Academy.

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VII

JIHAD

Place of Jihad in Religion

The call given by the Prophet was not limited to the attainment of perfect and complete knowledge of God, giving of faith to the true and accepted creed, performance of acts of worship, whether physical or meditative, and giving away of one's wealth in charity for attaining propinquity to God. It also enjoined *jihad* as one of its basic principles and a fundamental necessity; an act highly valued and essential for the success of his mission. Says the Qur'an :

" He it is who hath sent His messenger with the guidance and the Religion of Truth, that He may cause it to prevail over all religion, however much the idolators may be averse." (9: 33)

The Divine Writ also commands :

" And fight them until persecution is no more, and religion is all for Allah" (8:39)

Jihad is the tower in the castle of Islam; it is as much an exalted abode of the hereafter as it confers earthly glory on those who fight in the way of God. The holy Prophet attained the crowning crest of faith, embracing all its ramifications, because he strived with all his strength from the core of his heart to the might of arms in the cause of God. He devoted himself eagerly to preaching, creating a heart-felt awareness of God, and also combated for the purpose whenever it was necessary. That is

why he was the most exalted and nearest to God in this world. Warfare in the way of God is but a part of the subjective struggle with one's own self—a fact explained by the Prophet thus : " An emigrant is one who gives up the things prohibited by God." Resistance to one's own desires and propensities is the highest form of *jihad*, more important than fighting with the enemy, or rather the very basis of it.

Classifications of Jihad

The types of *jihad* are four : (1) striving against one's own self ; (2) fighting the machinations of the Devil ; (3) fighting the disbelievers ; and (4) fighting the hypocrites ; each one of these has a different gradation and varying resultant reward. The holy Prophet is reported to have said that :

"Whoever dies without fighting in the way of God and without even a longing for the same, he passes away with a fragment of hypocrisy (in his heart). "

One is most perfect in faith in the eyes of God who has compassed all the grades and stations of *jihad*. The last Prophet of God was nearest to his Lord since he had attained all the stages and standards of *jihad*. in the most perfect manner. He continued to strive from the beginning of his mission to the last breath in way of God ; he preached and propagated the message entrusted to him both privately and publicly ; he and his companions braved all the opposition of the infidels until some of his companions had to migrate to Abyssinia ; he had then himself to leave Mecca for Medina alongwith his companions ; he settled down in Medina where, with the divine blessings and grace, he established a well-knit Muslim society whose members were considerate to each other and held him dearer than their own fathers and sons, husbands and wives. It was then that the pagan Arabs and the Jews united for opposing Islam and arrayed their forces to fight the Muslims. Allah continued to command Muslims to practice forbearance, mercy and forgiveness until Muslims were made strong and powerful enough to face the infidels. Allah then permitted the Muslims to wage war

although it was not made obligatory by that time.

“Sanction is given unto those who fight because they have been wronged ; and Allah is indeed Able to give them victory.” (22:39)

This permission meant only to fight those who waged war against the Muslims ; they were not allowed to fight those who had not drawn the sword against them.

“Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but begin no hostilities.” (2: 190)

Then fighting with the infidels was made obligatory for the Muslims. The divine command said :

“And fight them until persecution is no more, and religion is all for Allah.”(8:39)

Merits of Jihad

The Prophet is reported to have said, “ Had I not been mindful of the hardship to my followers, I would have never been in the rear of any army. I long that I should be slain in the way of God, raised up again and be slain, and then again revived and be slain.”

He also said, “One who fights in the way of God is like the man keeping fast, offering prayers and reciting the revelations from God continuously, not weary of either the fasting or the prayer, until the battler for God returns from the battle-field.”

It is related from the Prophet : “To go out for battle in the way of God, only for a morn or eve, is better than the world and whatever it contains.” And, he also said, “The doors of paradise are beneath the swords.” About the merits of *jihad* he said, “The feet on which dust settles while going in the way of God shall not touch the fire.” A few other sayings of the Prophet are: “The dust that one gathers on the face while going for *jihad* and the smoke of Gehenna shall not combine.” “To stick to one's guns at the battle front is better than the world and all that it contains.” “The summit of Islam is *jihad*.” When the clash in a battle came to close quarters, people used to lean upon the Prophet and he was found nearest to the enemy.

The Prophet used to forbid lifting one's hand against women and children. Whenever he sent out any detachment for hostilities he used to urge his men to be God-fearing and instructed them thus :

“Go ahead in the name of God for his cause. Fight the disbelievers and do not mutilate (a corpse) nor resort to treachery or pilferage nor yet slay a child.”

Whenever he appointed a commander to any army or detachment one of the instructions he gave was :

“When you find the enemy facing you offer them these three conditions. If they accept any one of these, you should also agree and keep off your hands from them. Ask them to migrate to the territory where other emigrants live and tell them that if they do as you have proposed, they would have the same rights and obligations as other emigrants. If they do not agree then tell them that they would be treated like other Muslims (nomads). The commandments of God would apply to them also like the rest of the Muslims and they would be entitled to the spoils of war only when they fight the enemy along with other Muslims. If they are not agreeable even to it then ask them to pay *jizyah* (the poll-tax) and if they agree to it desist from fighting them. But if they do not agree even to this then fight them placing reliance on God.”¹

The Prophet forbade to indulge in loot and mutilation of corpses and strongly interdicted pilferage of the spoils of war. He used to say ; “What a Muslim promises is binding on all. Even an ordinary person among the Muslims can make a covenant with others.” He used to say that the enemy gains an upper hand over those who break their covenants.²

The Prophet fought in twenty-seven battles. Other expeditions sent by him but in which he was not present number sixty,

1. Muslim, on the authority of Sulaimān b. Buraida

2. Summarised from *Zād al Ma'ād*, pp. 292-326.

although a number of these were bloodless for no hostilities took place in them. The number of persons who fell in these battles and expeditions is incomparably small in the history of warfare. The persons killed, belonging to both the sides, in these battles and expeditions was only 1,018.¹ It is difficult to estimate how this small amount of blood spilt in the Prophet's battles and expeditions saved mankind from degradation and protected human dignity. It created such a peace in that lawless country that a lonely woman could undertake a journey from Hira, a far off city in Iraq, to Mecca and return after the pilgrimage unmolested, fearing none save God.² *Jihad* is thus a means to carry the message of Islam for liberating man from the bondage of his fellow beings; for bringing him to the threshold of his Lord and Master; conducting him to the Justice of Islam from the tyranny of religions; and helping him to taste the limitless freedom of the world beyond in place of the limited, sensuous and moribund pleasures of the finite world.

The Prophet is reported to have said:

"*Jihad* shall continue from my prophethood to the time when the last of my followers will fight Dajjāl: *jihad* cannot be brought to an end either by the tyranny of the tyrants or the justice of the righteous."³

Another saying of the Prophet runs: "One who meet God without a scar of *jihad*, he shall have blisters (on his body)."⁴ Yet another saying reported from the Prophet relates: "One who dies without participating in a *jihad* or even a longing to fight in *jihad*, he dies with a portion of hypocrisy (in his heart):"⁵

Jihad, if fought with due regard to the conditions prescribed for it, is a source of divine grace, goodness for the world and a

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1. As calculated by Qazi Muhammad Sulaimān Mansur-pūri in the *Rahmat-ul-lil Alamīn*.
 2. *Suyūṭī, Jām'e Kabīr*
 3. *Ibid*
 4. *Tirmidhī, Abū Dawūd*.
 5. *Abū Dawūd*.

blessing for the humanity.¹ Cession of *jihad* and its substitution by political wards and internal revolutions in the name of nations and countries, devoid of all the exalted values like propagation of truth and justice or deliverance of mankind from the clutches of ignorance, superstition and self-indulgence, have led to denial of divine blessings to the Muslims who have been losing authority and influence in international affairs.² This is a fulfilment, word for word and letter for letter, of the foreboding contained in this saying of the holy Prophet :

“The nations of the world will before long fall on you like the people taking food from a single pot,” said the Prophet. The companions enquired, “O Messenger of Allah! “Will we be few in numbers at that time?” “No”, said the Prophet in reply, “Your number will be large but you will be like scum of flood waters; God will take away your fear from the hearts of your enemy and install *wahn* in your hearts.” “And what is *wahn*?” asked the companions. The Prophet replied, “It is love of the world and abhorrence of death.”³

Authentic *ahādīth* contain a saying of the holy Prophet which makes this prediction.

“When you will start buying and selling on terms analogous to interest, will be satisfied with your cultivations with the tails of cows in your hands and give up *jihād*, then God will make you suffer indignity which will not come to an end until you again return to your religion.”⁴

1. For details see *Sirāt-i-Mustaqīm*, pp. 95-96, *Maktab'a Salafiyah, Lahore*.
2. The tragic happenings of Beirut in August-September, 1982 furnish an example of it. The Jews and Lebanese Christian militants joined hands to massacre the Palestinians and committed excesses which were shameful even for uncivilized barbarians. But the entire world of Islam witnessed these acts of barbarism in utter silence and helplessness. *Lo ! herein lies a lesson for men possessed of eyes* (3 : 13).
3. *Sunan Abū Dawūd*.
4. *Ibid*

Jihād does not necessarily mean warfare or hostilities in the field of battle, it comprises every effort that is made for the predominance of Truth and the religion of God. The Prophet is reported to have said :

“The highest form of *jihād* is to speak out the truth to a tyrant king or ruler.”

It is not at all permissible for the Muslims to turn a blind eye to the sufferings of their brothers in faith and do nothing for such unfortunate people who are subjected to persecution, oppression and indignity for the simple reason that they are Muslims. It is a collective responsibility of the Muslims to come to their rescue or at least to let the oppressors realise that their crimes are being viewed with disfavour by the rest of the Muslims. The Prophet has said :

“You will find the believers mutually compassionate, kind and loving like the parts of a body, which develop fever and restlessness if one of it suffers an ailment.”¹

The Prophet is also reported to have said that :

“One who cares nothing for the affair of the Muslims is not one of them.”²

1. *Muslim : Bukhārī*

2. *Baihaqī, Shu'ab-al-Imān.*

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VIII

CHARACTER OF THE PROPHET

The fundamental reason for the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and its beneficial impact on humanity have been explicitly set forth in the Book of God.

“Thus we have sent forth to you a messenger from amongst you, who recites to you Our revelations and purifies you and teaches you the Book and wisdom, and teaches you what you were not wont to know.” (2:151).

And again :

“Truly God was gracious to the believers when He raised up among them a Messenger from themselves, to recite to them His signs and to purify them, and to teach them the Book and the wisdom, though before they were in manifest error.” (3:164).

At another place the Qur’ān says :

“He it is who has raised up among the unlettered ones a messenger of their own, to recite unto them His revelations and to purify them, and to teach them the Scripture and wisdom. Though they have hitherto been in gross error.” (62:2)

The mission of the Prophet assigns an important place to the cultivation of moral virtues and self-purification. It is a familiar theme running through the whole of Qur’ān which makes it

abundantly clear that wisdom stands for exalted morality. In the *sūrah Isrā* the Qur'ān expounds the bases of morality and civilized behaviour and goes on to call them as 'wisdom'.

"That is of the wisdom thy Lord has revealed to thee."
(17:39)

Again, before descending to the particulars of Prophet Luqmān's moral teachings the Qur'ān alludes to them as wisdom vouchsafed to him.

"Indeed, We gave Luqmān wisdom: Give thanks unto Allah. Whosoever giveth thanks, he giveth thanks only for his own soul's good, and whosoever is ungrateful—Surely Allah is Absolute, Owner of Praise." (31:12)

In the *Sūrat-ul-Baqarah* the human weakness of harbouring a fear of being reduced to poverty by contributing liberally to the works of charity and public good is discounted, the believers are urged to place reliance on God and then the discussion is summed up with these words :

"He gives wisdom to whomsoever He will, and whoso is given wisdom, has been given much good ; yet none remembers save men of understanding." (2:269).

The Prophet has himself explained the purpose of his prophethood in these words :

"I have been sent to carry the morals to perfection."¹

The Prophet was a perfect model of good morals. The Qur'ān expresses this fact thus :

"Surely thou art upon a mighty morality." (68:2)

Once, when Ayesha was asked about the morals of the prophet, she replied :

"If you want to know of his morals, see the Qur'ān."²

The wisdom or perfection of morals and purification of the

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1. *Malik, Muwatta*. Ibn 'Abdul Barr traces it to the Prophet through Abū Hurairah and other companions. Imām Ahmad retates it on the authority of Abū Hurairah wherein he reports the Prophet as saying, "I have been commissioned for the perfection of morals."
 2. *Muslim*.

self attained by the earlier Muslims was the result of training and guidance and personal example set by the Prophet before his companions. A whole generation was raised, in the company of the Prophet, which was most virtuous, possessed of the best morality, abhorred every evil, ignorance and superstition and was on tenterhooks to avoid self-delusion and wiles of the Devil. The Qur'an bears witness to the perseverance, reformative zeal and moral strength of these men when it says :

“And know that the Messenger of God is among you. If he obeyed you in much of the affairs, you would suffer ; but God has endeared to you belief, decking it fair in your hearts, and He has made detestable to you unbelief and ungodliness and disobedience. Those—they are the right-minded, by God's favour and blessing : God is All-knowing, All-wise.” (49 : 7-8).

The Prophet also confirmed it when he said :

“The best of men are my contemporaries.”¹

An eminent companion of the Prophet has described the distinguishing features of his comrades in a pithy sentence :

‘Truehearted, profound in knowledge and absolutely unassuming.’

Those were the men produced by Islam through prophetic care and guidance ; it was a miracle that could have been worked only by a Prophet.

A Perennial Workshop of Humanity

The personal guidance provided by the holy Prophet came to an end with his departure from this fleeting world, but the Qur'an, *ahādīth* and the glowing examples of the Prophet's life continued to show the right path. Way to purification of the self contained in the wisdom of prophetic teachings was a sure cure to all the ailments of the heart, self-conceit and the ruses of Satan.

The changing political, social and economic conditions

1. *Bukhārī*

became an impediment in correct application of the educative norms and values of the *ahādīth*. Other sciences, religious and secular, helpful in advancing the people to gain worldly positions and posts of authority overshadowed the study of *hadīth* and the curriculum followed in educational institutions came to be limited to scholastic discussions of religion and theoretical treatment of purely historic or intellectual issues or those pertaining to historicity of past events and the biographical details of the Prophet's life.

But, despite these deviations, the *hadīth* and biography of the Prophet still continue, of course, next to the Qur'ān, as the most potent means of acquaintance with the norms of ethics, purification of self, cleansing of heart and virtuous behaviour.

The matter contained in the books of *ahādīth* is of two types. One of it pertains to affairs, practicable and tangible, such as, the postures of the prayer, recitation of the Qur'ān, orisons and invocations, preaching of religion, behaviour in war and peace and similar other practices and injunctions. The second category expounds those inner states and conditions which are the end result of the practices described in the former group. We can call these resulting dispositions and temperaments as sincerity and self-criticism, steadfastness, abstinence and self-sufficiency, courtesy and modesty, awe of God, humility and broken-heartedness while entreating God, preference of hereafter over the world, anxiety to win the pleasure of God, moderation, dislike of excess in every matter, kindness to all and clemency to the poor and weak, wholesomeness of disposition and manners, benevolence and munificence, patience, courage, hatred and love for the sake of God, nobility and humanity, forgiveness, returning the good for the evil and several other similar moral virtues which cannot be understood easily for one would find it hard to comprehend them without a living example of sublime behaviour illustrating them in a practical manner.

We are accordingly giving here a description of the tender susceptibilities of the holy Prophet handed down to us by eye

witnesses, who were nearest to him, knew all about his public and private life and had a penetrating insight into human behaviour and psychology. Thereafter we shall make a mention of the character and morals of the Prophet.

Distinguishing Features of the Prophet's Personality :

We shall cite here only two witnesses. One of these is Hind b. Abī Hālā (the son of Khadīja and maternal uncle of Hasan and Husain) and the other is 'Alī b. Abi Tālib. Hind b. Abi Hālā is on record that :

“Being care-laden with the anxiety of after-life, the Prophet would remain engrossed in the thought of hereafter continually for long spells and seemed to be endlessly perturbed by it. Often he would remain silent for long and never spoke needlessly. When he spoke, he enunciated each syllable distinctly and thus he would also end his speech. Whatever he said, it was always explicit and in plain terms. His speech was never long-winded nor unnecessarily concise. He was kind-hearted, soft-spoken, never harsh or cool in his behaviour. Neither he humiliated anyone nor himself liked to be treated with disrespect. The Prophet set much by every provision; even if it was small in quantity, he never deprecated it. As for the edibles, he neither disapproved nor praised them; nor he showed anger about anything of the world or what it contains. However, whenever one failed to meet one's obligation to God, nothing could cool his indignation until he had paid back in full measure. But, for the wrongs done to his own person, he would never become angry nor he retaliated.”

“When he pointed out something, he did so with his whole hand; and when he was astonished he turned his hands over. In speaking with another man, he would strike the palm of the left on the thumb of his right hand. Angry, he would avert his face; joyful, he would look

downwards. His laughter was but a smile, and when he laughed, his teeth used to appear white as hailstones."

Another was 'Alī b. Abī Tālib, who was nearest to the Prophet; had the opportunity of knowing all about him and also possessed the gift of describing a thing or character in its vividness and intensity. He says about the Prophet:

"He was pre-disposed to refrain from unseemly language, curses or revilings and deeds shameful; in no wise he did or said anything improper; he never raised the tone of his voice in a market place; nor returned evil for evil; rather he was given to forgive and forget. Never in his life he raised his hands against anyone save in a fight for the sake of God, nor did he strike anybody with his hands, neither a servant nor a woman. I never saw him exacting retribution for any offence or excess save when the honour of God was involved or the limit set by Him was transgressed, for, in that case the Prophet was more enraged than anybody else. If he had to choose between two alternative courses, he chose the easier one. When he came to his house, he behaved like a commoner; washed his garments, milked the sheep and performed the household chores.

"The Messenger of God was not given to idle talk, he spoke only when he was concerned and comforted the people instead of giving them a scare through his speech. If a man of rank or nobility called upon him from another tribe, he showed him due honour and appointed him to some respectable post. He was as cautious in his dealings with the people as he was overcareful in forming an estimate about them but he never denied anyone his courtesy and sweet temper. He always kept himself posted with the affairs of his companions and used to ask them about their welfare.

"He talked of what was good and commended it; deprecated the vile and discouraged it; was always moderate but steadfast without any wavering; never allowed

anything to escape his attention lest others should become negligent or get distracted ; took care to possess the means for every contingency ; and was never found wanting in doing what was right and proper, but in no wise did he exceed the limits. Those who kept his company were all virtuous and the elect ; one was best in his estimation who was the most benignant and courteous to all ; and the most esteemed in his eyes was one who excelled others in benevolence and kindness and did favour to others. The Prophet would stand up with the name of God on his lips and so he took his seat. Wherever he went, he sat down in the rear and instructed others to do the same. He paid such an attention to everyone in his company that everybody thought that none attracted his attention more than him. If anybody asked him to sit down or spoke of his affair, the Prophet listened to him patiently and gave heed to him until he had finished his talk and departed. If anybody asked for something or wanted his help, he never allowed him to leave without disposing of his business or at least comforted him with words kind and sweet. Such was his grace and kindness to one and all that everybody took him as his father. In regard to what was right and proper he regarded all on the same plane. His were the gatherings of knowledge and edification, of seemliness and modesty, of earnestness and probity. Neither anyone talked in a loud voice, nor censured others, nor cast a reflection on anybody, nor found fault with others ; all were equal on an even ground, and only those enjoyed a privilege who were more pious and God-fearing. The elders in his company were held in reverence, the youngers were treated kindly, those in need were given preference by all and the wayfarers and strangers were afforded protection and looked after."

He Further says :

“Of cheerful disposition, the Messenger of God was always bright and radiant ; he was tenderhearted and sweet-tempered ; not stern by nature ; nor spoke harshly ; nor was accustomed to speaking loudly ; nor to say anything unseemly or lewd ; nor yet was he wont to find fault with others. He was not stingy, nor miser ; if he disliked the request made to him he simply ignored it and gave no reply instead of refusing the request outright. From three things he always kept aloof : one was squabble, the other arrogance, and the third dabbling in a futile task. And, the three things he spared others were that he never spoke ill of anybody, nor maligned anyone, nor pried into the failings of others. He gave tongue only to the things that were virtuous. When he spoke, all those present listened to him attentively lowering their heads as if birds were sitting on their heads. Others spoke only when the Prophet had finished his talk, nobody joined issue with others in his presence and when anybody said something others kept quiet until he had finished his talk. Everybody was given an equal opportunity to express himself. The Prophet of God would smile on the remarks which made others laugh ; he expressed surprise over things which astonished others. He always gave heed to the wayfarers and used to put up patiently with the rudeness of the strangers until his companions diverted the attention of such persons to themselves. He used to say, ‘Help those whom you find in need.’ He gave ears only to such tributes as were modestly worded and never interrupted others or cut into their talk. If anybody exceeded his limits, he either forbade him or got up to cut short such prattle.

“He was the most generous, large-hearted, truthful, clement, lenient and amiable. One who saw him for the first

time was overawed; but when he kept his company and came to know him intimately, he became attached to him like an inseparable companion. Those who had seen him say that they had never seen a man like him either before or after him—May God have peace and blessings on His Apostle.”¹

Natural Disposition

The Prophet came of the noblest stock, yet he was very modest, exceedingly large-hearted and most sweet-tempered; he never kept aloof from his companions; cherished a kind and tender disposition towards children and often took them in his lap; accepted the invitation to take meals with slaves and maidservants, the poor and the indigent; visited the sick even if he had to go to the farthest corner of the city and always accepted the excuse offered for a misdeed.² The Prophet was never seen stretching his legs whilst sitting with his companions lest anyone of them should feel inconvenience. His companions recited or listened poems, described some incident of the pagan past while the Prophet either sat silently or smiled with them at some amusing remark. The Prophet was extremely kindhearted and affectionate—the finest human sentiments and virtues were discernible in his demeanour. Often he asked his daughter Fatima, “Send for my both sons (Hasan and Husain).” When the two came running, the Prophet used to kiss and embrace them.³ Once he happened to have in his lap one of his grandsons who was at the last gasp. His eyes started overflowing. S’ad asked, “What is this, O Messenger of God?” “This is compassion,” replied the Prophet, “planted in the hearts of such servants of God whom He wills. Verily, God has mercy upon those who are compassionate.”⁴

1. *Shamā'il Tirmidhī*.

2. *Abū Nu'aym, Hilyat-ul-Auliya*.

3. *Tirmidhī*.

4. *Bukhārī*

When ‘Abbās, the uncle of the Prophet was shackled with other prisoners taken in the battle of Badr, the Prophet could not sleep because of the groaning of ‘Abbās. The Ansār, on coming to know the Prophet’s uneasiness, untied him and offered to release him without demanding any indemnity. The Prophet, however, did not agree to the suggestion.

The Prophet was extremely kind to the Muslims. He was so tolerant that he overlooked their occasional weariness and boredom. He set his sermons and discourses at intervals lest the people got tired. If he heard a baby crying while he was leading a prayer, he invariably shortened it and said, “I stand up for prayer and want to recite a longer *sūrah*, but when I hear a baby crying I cut the prayer short so that his mother may not feel uneasy.”

The Prophet used to say, “None of you should speak ill of others in my presence since I desire to meet all of you with a clean heart.” Benign and gracious to all the Muslims like their father, the Prophet used to say, “The property left by the deceased belongs to his heirs, but the debt left by him is my responsibility.” Moderation and temperance were his innate dispositions. ‘Ayesha relates that the God’s Messenger was never given a choice between two courses when he preferred the easier one provided it involved no sin; for, if it did involve a sin, no one kept farther away from it than he. He used to say, “God likes to see the marks of His bounty on His servants.”

The Prophet occupied himself in his house like a common man. As ‘Ayesha relates, he used to wash his clothes, milch the goat and himself do the odd jobs like mending his garments and repairing his shoes. When asked how the Prophet occupied himself within his house, she replied, “He used to keep himself busy in household chores but went out to offer the prayers when the time arrived.” She also says, “The Prophet was very softhearted, the kindest of all. He laughed often and smiled much. Anas relates that he had not seen a man who was more kind and nice to his household members than the Messenger of God. It is related on the authority of ‘Ayesha that the Prophet said, “The

best amongst you is he who is most nice to his wife and children and I am the nicest among you." Abū Huraira reports that the Prophet never expressed displeasure of any food (served to him); he ate it if he desired, otherwise left it alone.

Anas reports, "I served the Prophet of God for ten years but he never blamed me for doing or not doing anything, nor he ever asked me why I had done or not done smething." The companions of the Prophet never stood up as a mark of respect to him since he disliked the practice. He used to tell them, "Do not exalt me as the Christians have exalted Jesus, son of Mary. I am just His servant, so call me God's servant and messenger." Anas states that any slave-girl or maidservant of Medina could hold the Prophet by his hand and say whatever she liked or take him to the place she desired. When 'Adiy b. Hātim came to see the Messenger of God, he invited him to come within his house. A maidservant brought a cushion to rest upon but the Prophet placed it in-between him and 'Adiy, and sat down on the floor. 'Adiy later said that this made him understand that the Prophet was not a king. Once a man was overawed in his presence. The Prophet reassured him, saying, "Take heart, I am not a king but the son of a Quraishite women who used to eat dried meat"¹. The Prophet used to sweep the floor of his house, eat with the maidservant, knead the dough and make purchases.

If he came to know of a thing about someone not liked by him, he never asked why had he done it. He would rather refer to it in an indirect way by saying what has happened to the people that they do or utter such things. He made the man conscious of desisting from the unseemly act without referring to him by name.

The compassion of the Prophet encompassed even the dumb creatures. He always asked his followers to be kind and compassionate to them. He is reported to have said, "God has commanded you to show kindness to everyone, so if you have to kill (an animal) kill it nicely. If anyone of you has to slaughter

1. *Ibn Mājah*.

(an animal), he should sharpen the blade first and also give it rest." The Prophet is also reported to have said, "Fear God in the matter of these dumb creatures. If you ride them, ride when they are healthy; and if you eat them, eat when they are in a good condition." The Prophet enjoined everyone to be kind and considerate to his servant or slave or the hired labour. "Feed them with the food you eat," said the Prophet, "clothe them with the clothes you wear and do not be hard to the creatures of God." The Prophet is further stated to have said, "Those whom God has made your dependents, are your brothers, servants and helpmates. Anybody whose brother has been made subservient to him, ought to feed him with the food he eats and clothe him with the clothes he wears; demand nothing that is beyond his power, but if it becomes necessary to get such a task executed then he should help him in doing the job."

Once a nomad came to the Prophet and asked, "How many times should I pardon my servant in a day?" "Seventy times," replied the Messenger of God. The Prophet also instructed his followers thus; "Pay the wages of a labourer before his sweat dries up."¹

Features of the Holy Prophet.

Man is disposed to take after the habits and manners of one whom he admires and holds them dear even though he may not be obliged to do so rationally or legally. The ways of love are strange indeed; the admirer is always crazy to know all about the behaviour and traits, likes and dislikes and modes and manners of the adored person. He wants to know how the person dear to his heart used to sit and walk, what he wore or how he dressed, in short, everything about him whether it is essential to know or not.

These were the reasons that provided the impulse to compile voluminous works on the features and manners of the holy

1. Summarised from the author's *Muhammad Rasulallah*, pp. 411-441.

Prophet in the ages past, and they still continue to invite the people to devote their energies to the task. *Shamā'il* of Imām Tirmidhī was the most celebrated among the earlier works.¹ A few of the sketches included in this work are briefly presented here.

The Prophet used to walk so rapidly as if he was going down a slope. When he paid attention to anyone he turned with his whole body, looking downwards. He fixed his gaze more to the ground than to the sky and normally looked with the sides of his eyes. When accompanied by his companions, he asked them to walk ahead of him. On meeting anybody, he always saluted first. His locks were neither too short nor too long on the two sides, they touched the middle of the lobes of his ears; in the back they reached the shoulders.

Often he parted his locks and rubbed oil also. He used to comb his beard. Whenever he combed, or performed ablution, or wore the shoes, he always began from the right side. The Prophet applied antimony to his eyes every night thrice in each eye. Long shirt was his favourite dress among the garments and whenever he put on a new dress like a turban or scarf, he began it with a thanks-giving to God. Thereafter he recited the prayer:

اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ كَمَا كُوتِبَتْ، أَسْأَلُكَ خَيْرَ مَا صُنِعَ لَهُ،
وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا صُنِعَ لَهُ.

“Praise be to the Lord! Thanks be to Thee for clothing me with it. O Allah, I pray Thee for the good that is in it, and the good that hath been made for it; and I seek Thy refuge from the evil that is in it, and from the evil that hath been made for it.”

The Prophet recommended that white clothes should be worn during life-time and said that the shroud for the dead

1. Ibn Kathīr has also made a valuable contribution to the subject by writing the *Shamā'il-ar-Rasūl*.

should also be white for it was the best colour. Negus, the king of Abyssinia, once gifted a pair of black socks to him. He wore them and performed *masah*¹ on them while performing ablution. The Prophet had performed prayers with the shoes which had an additional sole of leather attached to them. He disliked going about with one shoe and asked the people to put on both or take off both. He used to tell the people to put on the shoe first on the right foot but take off the left one first. The Prophet also wore a ring in his right hand. He got a ring made on which "Muhammad" "Rasul" and "Allah" was inscribed in a descending order. He used to put off the ring while going to lavatory.

The Prophet wore a black turban when he entered Mecca on taking that city. The end of his turban used to hang down between his shoulders. Ubaid b. Khālid al-Muhārībī says that once when he was going somewhere in Medīna, he heard someone behind him asking him to lift up his *lungi* (one part outer garment to cover the lower part of the body). When he turned round to see him he found that it was Prophet of God. He submitted, "This is an ordinary sheet of cloth (meaning thereby that it was hardly fit to give oneself airs)." The Prophet replied, "Does not my example hold good for you?" Ubaid relates that thereupon he looked at the *lungi* of the Prophet which reached the middle of his ankles.

The Prophet was not used to take food reclining on a pillow. He used to say, "I do not recline while eating." After he had taken his food, he used to lick his fingers. He was also not used to taking food placed on a kitchen table or in a saucer. Nor thin breads were ever cooked for him. Qatāda was asked, "Where did the Prophet kept his food while eating." He replied, "On a table-cloth made of leather." The Prophet relished cucumbers and pumpkins and had a special liking for sweetmeats and honey. He also liked to take the shoulder of a

1. An act of touching the boots for ritual purification, by drawing three central wet fingers over the leather socks.

kid or lamb. Ayesha, however, says that it was not because of any special liking but that he seldom had the opportunity of taking meat and the shoulder pieces got cooked quickly. He wanted to take meals early and get busy in other matters. Likewise, the Prophet preferred to take the food left over in the cooking pot or a utensil.

The Prophet used to say that Satan becomes a partner when anybody starts taking food without mentioning the name of God on it. If anybody forgets to begin his meals in the name of God, he should say :

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ أَوَّلَهُ وَآخِرَهُ.

“In the name of Allah, in the beginning and at the end.”
After he had taken the food he used to say :

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَطْعَمَنَا وَسَقَانَا وَجَعَلَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ.

“Praise belongs to God who fed us, gave us to drink and made us believers.”

When the meals had been taken and the table-cloth removed, he used to pray thus :

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ حَمْدًا كَثِيرًا طَيِّبًا مُبَارَكًا فِيهِ، غَيْرَ مُودَعٍ وَلَا مُسْتَعْتَبٍ عَنْهُ رَبَّنَا.

“Praise belongs to God, in great measure, wholesome and blessed ; who can neither be forsaken nor escaped. He is our Lord.”

The Prophet used to say : “God, is pleased to see His servant eating and drinking and then praising Him.”

The drink he liked most was cold and potable water for he often said : “Like milk there is no substitute for food and water.” He is reported to have drank *zamzam* while standing and used to take water in three draughts.

The Prophet had a scent box from which he used to rub attar on his clothes. If anybody offered attar, he never refused it and often said, "Three things ought not to be refused; a pillow, scent and milk." He is reported to have said, "Masculine scents are those whose fragrance spreads but the colour is inconspicuous while feminine scents have a colour that suppresses their fragrance"

'Ayesha relates, "The Messenger of Allah was not used to speak rapidly like you, running words into one another. He enunciated each syllable distinctly and said everything clearly, so that what he said was imprinted in the memory of everyone sitting near him. Often he repeated the sentence thrice to make it clearly understood by the hearers; his laughter was but a smile." 'Abdullah b. Hārith reports, "I have not seen anyone who smiled more than the Prophet and sometimes he laughed which showed his teeth." Jarīr b. 'Abdullah relates, "The Prophet never refused me an audience after I embraced Islam. He always welcomed me with a smile." Anas reports his own experience, "The Prophet was very intimate to us and often cut jokes at us. I had a younger brother whom the Prophet often asked, "Abū 'Umayr, Where is that birdling?"¹ Once some of the companions said to the Prophet, "Sire, we often make merry with you." "Yes", replied the Prophet, "but I never tell lies." The Prophet used to recite the verses of 'Abdullah b. Rawāha or some other poet. Oftentimes he recited a line by Tarāfa which read: "Does he also bring the news to you whom you have paid nothing." At times he said that if a truth was ever expressed by any poet, it was by Labīd b. Rabī'a who had said: "Know that everything is finite save God."

Once the Prophet got hurt in one of his fingers which showed a streak of blood. Thereupon the Prophet recited this verse:

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1. Abū 'Umayr had a birdling which was kept by him in a cage. Abū 'Umayr used to play with it. The Prophet said this wittingly after the birdling had died.

“Thou art a finger that simply got blood-stained ;
No harm, it was in the way of God that it happened.”¹

During the battle of Hunain the Prophet was heard reciting the couplet :

“Verily I am the Prophet without falsehood ;
And I am the son of ‘Abdul Muttalib.”

The Prophet permitted recital of poems in his company ; he liked such recitals and often rewarded the poets, Jābir b. Samurah says that he had attended over a hundred gatherings in which the Prophet was present. The companions recited the verses of earlier poets and recounted the happenings and stories of the pagan past. The Prophet used to listen silently and often smiled at their remarks. Often he got a pulpit placed in his mosque for Hassān b. Thābit to recite his eulogies praising the Prophet. At times he remarked that God has helped Hassān through Archangle Gabriel to defend the religion of God and His Prophet.

Whenever the Prophet intended to take rest, he placed his right hand beneath his left cheek and said :

رَبِّ قَتِي عَذَابَكَ يَوْمَ تَبْعُ عِبَادَكَ.

“My Lord, when Thou causes Thy servants to rise again,
save me from Thy torment.”

And when he got to his bed, he used to say :

اللَّهُمَّ بِاسْمِكَ أَمُوتُ وَأَحْيَا.

“Would that I die and live in Thy name, O Allah.”

On getting up, he supplicated in these words :

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَحْيَانَا بَعْدَ مَا أَمَاتَنَا وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ

1. This showed the literary taste and sharp memory of the Prophet, for the holy Prophet was not a poet. The Qur’ān says : “We have taught him no poetry, nor does it become him to be a poet.” (36 : 69)

“Praise belongs to God who revived us after causing death and to Him is the return.”

His bedding was made of leather stuffed with the bark of dates. He always paid a visit to the sick and made it a point to attend the funerals. He accepted the invitation to take food even if it was from a slave. He performed *hajj* on a litter couch with a curtain cloth hardly costing four *dirhams*. He used to say: “I would accept even if a leg of goat were given to me or invited to a repast of it.” He never said no to anyone even if he disliked the request made to him. He accepted the gifts and also gave something in return. He was extremely modest, even more than a maiden. If he was annoyed by any remark made by someone, its effect could clearly be seen on his face.¹

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1. Condensed from the *As-Sham'ail* of Imâm Tirmidhi. Interpretations of certain terms have been borrowed from the commentary on *As-Sham'ail* by Maulana Muhammad Zakaria of Kandhla (d. Sh'abân 1402 A. H.)

IX

MORAL TEACHINGS AND SELF-PURIFICATION

Some Spiritual Ailments and Their Cures

We give here a few verses of the Qur'an and narrate the deeds and sayings of the holy Prophet which provide an insight into ethical norms and purification of the self, and guide us to save ourselves from the failings of our desires, ruses of the devil and impairment of the soul. The remedies prescribed therein are unfailing, most suitable and extremely effective to cure all the maladies of human mind and heart for they have been inspired by the Lord, All-knowing and All-powerful, from whom nothing is concealed. Does He not say in His revelation to the last Prophet?

"Shall He who has created all things not know them all?
He is Wise and All-knowing." (67:14)

These are the directions revealed to an impeccable Messenger sent by God for purification of morals and the teaching of the Book and wisdom to the human beings. The holy Prophet has himself explained it thus :

"My Lord has guided me and instructed me well."

Whosoever will follow these instructions with sincerity and steadfastness will undoubtedly succeed in achieving his objective. If it be an individual he would become pious and spiritually perfect; if a community adopts these as its norm, it would become an ideal society.

Sincerity

"They were commanded only to serve God and to worship none but Him, to attend to their prayers and to pay the alms-tax. That, surely is the true faith." (98:5)

"Surely pure religion is for Allah only." (39:3)

Repentance

"O ye who believe! Turn unto Allah in sincere repentance!" (66:8)

Patience and Forgiveness

"And verily whoso is patient and forgiveth—surely that is true constancy." (42:43)

Living Awareness of God

"And He is with you wheresoever ye may be". (57:4)

"He knows the treachery of the eyes and what the breasts conceal." (40:19)

Fear of God

"O believers, fear Allah as He should be feared." (3:102)

"Believers, fear Allah and speak the truth." (33:70)

Trust in God

"In Allah let believers put their trust." (14:14)

"Put your trust in the Ever-living who never dies." (25:58)

Steadiness

"So tread thou the right path as thou are bidden." (11:112)

"Lo! those who say: Our Lord is Allah, and thereafter work aright, there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve. Such are the rightful owners of the Garden, immortal therein, as a reward of what they used to do." (46:13-14)

Reliance on God and the Prophet

“Should you disagree about anything refer it to Allah and the Apostle.” (4:59)

“Whatever the Apostle gives you, accept it, and whatever he forbids you, forbear from it.” (59:7).

Love for God and the Prophet

“But those who believe love Allah more ardently.” (2:165)

“Say, If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your clan, your possessions that you have gained, commerce you fear may slaken, dwellings you love—if these are dearer to you than God and His Messenger, and to fight in His way, then wait till God brings His command.” (9:24)

Cooperation in Righteous Deeds

“Help one another to piety and God-fearing; do not help each other in sin and transgression. And fear God; surely God is terrible in retribution.” (5:2).

Brotherhood of Believers

“The believers indeed are brothers.” (49:10).

Keeping the Trust

“God commands you to deliver trusts back to their owners.” (4:58).

Good Counselling

“There is no virtue in much of their counsels; save in his who enjoins charity, kindness and peace among men.” (4:114).

“Therefore have fear of Allah and end your disputes.” (8:1).

Kindness and Courtesy

“And lower thy wings unto the believers.” (15:88)

“And as for the orphan, do not oppress him, and as for the beggar, scold him not.” (93:9-10)

Following the Prophet's Example

“Say, (O Muhammad, to mankind) : If ye love Allah, follow me : Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.” (3:31).

Hope and Fear

“And fear you Me.” (2:40).

“Say, O my people who have been prodigal against yourselves, do not despair of Allah's mercy; surely Allah forgives sins altogether : surely He is the All-forgiving. The All-compassionate.” (39:53).

“None feels secure against Allah except those who shall be lost.” (7:99)

“Of God's comfort no man despairs, save the disbelieving folk.” (12:87).

Contentment

“Wealth and children are an ornament of life of the world. But the good deeds which endure are better in thy Lord's sight for reward, and better in respect of hope.” (18:46)

“This life of the world is but a pastime and a game. Lo ! the house of the Hereafter—that is life, if they but knew,” (29:64)

Self-Sacrifice

“Rather prize them (the refugees) above themselves though they are in want.” (59:9)

“They give food, for the love of Him, to the needy, the orphan, the poor.” (76:8).

Evils of Vanity and Troublemaking

“As for the Paradise to come, it shall be theirs who desire

neither exorbitance in the earth, nor corruption. The issue ultimate is to the God-fearing." (28:83)

Self-restraint

"Those who control their wrath and are forgiving toward mankind; Allah loveth the good." (3:134).

"O ye who believe ! Be careful of your duty to Allah, and be with the truthful." (9:119).

Mutual Rights of Muslims

"O believers, let not any people scoff at another people who may be better than they: neither let women scoff at women who may be better than themselves. And find not fault with one another, neither revile one another by nicknames. An evil name is ungodliness after belief. And whoso repents not, those, they are the evildoers." (49:11)

"O believers, eschew much suspicion ; some suspicion is a sin. And do not spy, neither backbite one another ; would any of you like to eat the flesh of his brother dead ? You would abominate it. And fear you Allah ; assuredly Allah is Forgiving, Compassionate." (49 : 12)

"And Those who malign believing men and believing women undeservedly, they bear the guilt of slander and manifest sin." (33 : 58)

"When you heard it, why did the faithful men and women, not think well of their own people, and say : This is an evident falsehood ?" (24 : 12)

PRONOUNCEMENTS OF THE PROPHET

Deeds depend on Intentions :

1. "Deeds depends on intentions and everyman shall be recompensed in accordance with what induced him to act ; thus one who has left his home for God and His messenger, his emigration would be deemed for them ;

and one who migrated for the world or to take a woman in marriage his emigration would be counted for that purpose.”

(*Sahihain*)

2. “All the previous sins of those will be forgiven who fast during Ramadhān with complete reliance on God and the hope of a goodly return from Him ; all the previous sins of those will be forgiven who spend *Lailatul Qadr* (the Night of Power) in prayers and vigils with complete reliance on God and the hope of a goodly return from Him.”

(*Bukhārī*)

Pre-requisites of Faith

3. “None of you can be a believer unless his desires are subordinated to what I have brought (to you).”

(*Tirmidhī and Khatīb Baghdādī*)

4. “None of you can be a believer unless I am dearer to him than his own father, sons and all others.”

(*Bukhārī*)

5. “None of you can be a believer unless I am dearer to him than his own self.”

(*Musnad Ahmad*)

6. “None of you can be a believer unless he is desirous of that for his brother which he wants for himself.”

(*Sahihain*)

7. “A Muslim is one from whose hands and tongue other Muslims feel secure and a believer is one from whom the life and property of others remain unthreatened.”

(*Tirmidhī and Nassā'i*)

8. “Nobody can be a Muslim unless his heart and tongue have also submitted and he cannot be a believer unless his neighbour is not secured from his misdeemeanour.” ‘Abdullah b. Mas‘ūd, who relates it, asked the Prophet, “What is meant by misdemeanour?” The Prophet replied, “Excess and oppression.”

(*Tirmidhī and Nassā'i*)

9. "The excellence of Islam is that a man gives up every frivolity."

(*Malik, Ahmad and Tirmidhi*)

10. "Three things consequential to faith are : spending despite privation, making the salutation prevalent and being impartial even in respect of one's own self."

(*Bizār*)

11. "One who lacks honesty has no faith ; one who does not abide by one's promise has no religion. Only he shall taste the sweetness of faith who has three qualities : that Allah and His Messenger are dearer to him than anything else ; that he loves one for the sake of God ; and that reversion to infidelity is as hard to him as being thrown into the fire.

(*Sahihain*)

12. "Religion means well-meaning," (said the Prophet thrice). On being asked, "For whom?" he replied, "For Allah, and His Book, and His Prophet and the Muslim Imāms and leaders and the masses."

(*Muslim*)

13. "There are three things that are indicative of a hypocrite : when he speaks, he tells lies ; when he promises, he never fulfils it ; and when he is charged with a trust, he misappropriates it."

(*Sahihain*)

14. "Modesty comes out of faith."

(*Sahihain*)

15. "Avoid what is impermissible and you would be the best in your devotion to God. Be content with what God has ordained for you, and you would be self-reliant. Be benevolent to your neighbours and you would be a believer. Desire the same for others what you like for yourself and you would be a Muslim ; and do not laugh much for it deadens the heart."

(*Tirmidhi*)

Muslim Society based on Prophetic Teachings

16. "Hark! Muslims are brothers unto one another, hence the treatment you deem right for yourself should be valid for your brother-in-faith."
17. "Do not be envious of one another; never deal fraudulently in sales and purchases; never be grudging nor indulge in back-biting; never try to steal a march over others in selling (your goods). O servants of God, be brothers unto one another; every Muslim is a brother of another Muslim; he is never oppressive, nor deserts him, nor looks down upon him, (Pointing to his breast, he said thrice) Awe of God resides here. It is enough for the vileness of a man that he holds a low opinion of his Muslim brother! (Shedding of the) blood, (usurpation of) property and (attacking the) honour of a Muslim is unlawful for another Muslim."
(Muslim)
18. "It is not permissible for anyone to be estranged from his brother for more than three days or that they should meet and turn away from one other; and he is worthier who is first in saluting (the other)."
(Bukhari)
19. "A believer is a mirror unto another; a believer is a brother unto other; he guards the field of the other and looks after it in his absence."
(Abū Dawūd)
21. "Should I tell you something even more virtuous than fasting and prayer and charity?" asked the Prophet. "Why not, O Prophet of God," replied the companions. The Prophet said, "It is to get on good terms with others. Estrangement destroys religion."
(Abū Dawūd)
21. "Do not make little of the smallest good, even if it be a warm reception to your brother."
(Muslim)

22. "You will find the believers like a body in love and compassion to one another; pain in one limb is accompanied by fever and restlessness all over the body."
(*Sahihain*)
23. "The entire creation is the family of Allah and Allah loves him most who is good to His family."
(*Baihaqi*)
24. "Gabriel laid so much emphasis on the (rights of) neighbours that I thought they would also be made heirs."
(*Sahihain, Abū Dawūd, Tirmidhi*).
25. "The Compassionate blesses those who are kind to others. Be merciful to those who live on earth and the One in heaven will be merciful to you,"
(*Tirmidhi, Abū Dawūd*)

Acts destructive of Morality

26. "One who breaks off relationships shall not enter paradise."
(*Sahihain, Abū Dawūd, Tirmidhi*)
27. "The backbiter shall not enter paradise."
(*Sahihain*)
28. "Avoid envy, for it destroys virtues in the same way as fire burns the dry wood."
(*Abū Dawūd*)
29. "You have also fallen a prey to jealousy and grudging, the ailments of the earlier nations. It shears (you) completely. I do not mean the hair but the religion."
(*Tirmidhi; Ahmad*)
30. "Wolves let loose on (a herd of) goats would not cause as much damage as the love of wealth and office damages religion."
(*Tirmidhi; Ahmad*)

Virtuous Morals-A demand of Wisdom

31. "My Lord has commanded me to observe (these)

nine things :

“That I should stand in awe of Allah openly and in privy ;

“That I should speak out justly whether it is agreeable to me or not ;

“That I should keep the golden mean both in scarcity and sufficiency ;

“That I should fasten the bond with him who falls out with me ;

“That I should bestow on him who denies me ;

“That I should forgive him who oppresses me :

“That I should keep silence for meditation and speak to praise the Lord ;

“That I should direct my eyes to take a lesson ; and

“That I should (always) counsel what is good.”

(Razin)

32. “Fastener of bonds is not one who reciprocates, but one who tries to repair it when it is being impaired.”

(Bukhārī, Abū Dawūd, Tirmidhī)

33. “He is a perfect believer who is best in morals and the best among you are those who are nice to their womenfolk.

(Tirmidhī)

34. “Virtuous morals make a believer like unto one who constantly prays during his fast.”

(Abū Dawūd)

35. “Leave what is doubtful and accept that which is beyond doubt.”

(Ahmad, Dārmī)

36. “Question your heart, for, only that is good which satisfies the heart and conscience ; vice is that which pricks the heart and creates diffidence regardless of what the people say or you say.”

(Ahmad, Dārmī)

37. “Keep fearing God wherever you are and if you

happen to commit a wrong, do something righteous which will efface the wrong."

(*Ahmad, Tirmidhī, Dārmī*)

38. "I promise paradise to him who pledges to safeguard what is in between his two legs and the jaws."

(*Bukhārī, Tirmidhī*)

39. "A fearful wayfarer keeps travelling during the night, and one who continues the journey during night reaches his destination. Hark ye that it is hard to bargain with God but dealing with God means (attainment of) paradise."

(*Tirmidhī*)

40. "God makes his heart self-sufficing whose centre of thought is hereafter; he is made sound and whole-hearted; and the world submits to him in servitude. And God makes him who fixes his thoughts upon the world to appear impoverished, split up while he gets only that much of the world as has been preordained for him."

(*Tirmidhī*)

41. "He is prudent who is self-introspective and works for the life after death; and he is a stupid who runs after his desires but rests assured looking forward to God."

(*Tirmidhī*)

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X

ISLAMIC CULTURE AND WESTERN CIVILIZATION

Islam is a religion which cannot live and prosper in the absence of a culture congenial and suitable to its genius and conducive to its own atmosphere. It encompasses the entire gamut of human activity and aims at transforming human character and behaviour in accordance with its own framework of values emanating from truth and faith. It prescribes a complete system of mandatory religious services and social obligations, covering a greater part of one's life and time, with a set of stipulations and specifications: it has its own concept of cleanliness and purification; it does not equate purification with cultural refinement and decency with abstention from lawbreaking but gives them a much wider and deeper content. It cannot survive nor allow its followers to carry on with the Western civilization, which has, owing to its peculiar historical development, been brought up in a materialistic, anti-religious and amoral atmosphere. One who had studied the Western culture in depth in its own centres has described it in a verse which says:

"That the spirit of its culture lacks sanctity."¹

The entire system of divine service in Islam is based on

1. Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal.

purification while the culture of the West knows no more than tidiness. Islamic culture demands an undefiled heart which puts bridles on every unvirtuous thought and action. Western culture pays regard merely to the legal sanctions and, at the most, socially accepted norms, but if anything is permitted by law and society, it sees nothing objectionable in it. Islamic culture tends to be corrective, reforming the individual and society so that they themselves feel at ease within the limits placed by the *shari'ah*. On the other hand, West had thrown overboard every constraint and inhibition on its freedom of action at the very outset of its cultural development. Islam does not look kindly to the free-mixing of men and women as it considers it to be a source of many a moral corruption while it is an accepted norm or the very understructure supporting Western culture.

Besides these fundamental differences between the two there are a number of things like pictures, dogs, wearing of ornaments and silken dress by men, lawful meat (*koshar*) and similar other matters of detail in which the two hold a different or contrary view. Picturization of living creatures is not approved by Islam and the holy Prophet was averse to them. The Prophet is reported to have said: "Angels do not enter a house containing pictures, dogs and statues."¹ But these are indispensable for a house in the West. A natural consequence of accepting Western culture is that one cannot follow the Islamic way of life demanding unostentatiousness, modesty and chastity nor can take after the *sunnah* of the Prophet.

It is not that these difficulties arise only when Western culture is accepted wholeheartedly; they are experienced at every turn and pass in Western cultural atmosphere, however short the duration of one's sojourn may be. One can experience these difficulties during a brief stay in the hotels furnished on the Western pattern whether they be in the East Asiatic or Arabian countries or even in the holy cities. It

1. *Suhîh Bukhârî*.

becomes difficult to follow the rules of purification in these places and one is often forced to break them.

It is therefore essential that apart from adopting the creed, acts of service, *sunnah*, remembrance of God and the Islamic norms of behaviour dealt with earlier, those who go through this book should also try to ensure that their homes maintain the Islamic atmosphere. They should avoid, as far as possible, the characteristic features of Western civilization (like free-mixing of sexes, photography,¹ particularly cinema, television, singing and dancing, dogs, use of doubtful beverages etc.); observe *purdah* and modesty; follow the Islamic rules of cleanliness and purification by proper use of water, keep themselves informed of the *qiblah*; be careful about the injunctions about decency in dress and other articles of daily use and ensure religious education and training of their children. Heedlessness in this regard would make it difficult to observe the obligatory religious duties, let alone maintaining the way of life recommended by the holy Prophet. The process of weaning away a people from its own culture, developed in a particular religious climate, or restricting that culture to the observance of religious rites and duties tantamounts to severance of its present from the past. Such a process gradually leads to alienation of its followers from its faith and way of life which results in intellectual confusion and apostasy. Such a society falls a prey to social anarchy, disruption of family life and moral wickedness, and then it takes to wine and drugs like the Western society. All this can be seen in several Muslim countries which are blindly following the West.²

1. The evils of photography taken up by the Arab countries to emulate the West can be clearly seen. The author has come across these evils several times during his tours of these countries and pointed them out in his speeches and writings.
2. For a detailed description of these evil effects in Muslim countries see the author's *Western Civilization—Islam and Muslims*.

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